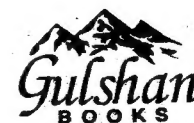


KASHMIR IN WAR AND DIPLOMACY

Zahid G. Muhammad



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Dedicated to my Parents

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PREFACE

In 1947 when India and Pakistan gained independence Jammu and Kashmir shot into international prominence as a dispute between these two newly born dominions. Since that day it has bedeviled the relations between the two countries. The dispute sparked three major wars in 1947, 1965 and 1999 and contributed to 1971 war. It caused scores of battles between the two countries and thousand of skirmishes on borders dividing the two countries. The dispute that is seen as legacy of partition of the Indian sub-continent was first referred to the Security Council of the United Nations on 1 January 1948. The United Nations passed many resolutions for ending this dispute and deliberated upon ways and means for resolving this problem, appointed number of commissions till India and Pakistan in the wake of Shimla Agreement, agreed to find a solution of the problem bilaterally. While dispute continued to be a part of the United Nations agenda India and Pakistan leaders met scores of times to find a solution to this vexed problem. But meetings always ended in a fiasco. Notwithstanding Kashmir problem continuing to find space in the international media as a major dispute between India and Pakistan posing threat to peace in South-Asia elections were held in the state and elected governments were formed. The elected governments suffered intrigues and counter intrigues that added more complexity to the issue which was 'otherwise far from simple'. And as time ticked the resolution of Kashmir problem assumed more complexity. Instate Political parties were born that challenged the instrument of accession and demanded right to self-determination. Political leaders suffered incarceration for years together and after getting fatigued with their demands ended up in assuming power. The past sixty years' history of this state has many benchmarks -1953, 1961, 1965, 1971, 1975 and 1989.

Of these the post 1989 period has been the most turbulent. Unprecedented death and destruction has occurred during the period. With India and Pakistan seeming now in mood to find an amicable solution of this problem hopes for peace, prosperity and development in the region have brightened.

This book is not a book on Kashmir problem. It does not give an account as to how this problem. It does not suggest any solution for the problem was born. It does not tell in detail about how this problem brought misery to the people of the State. It is based on columns published in various newspapers over a period of time. Most of the writings are from my column. Punch line, Published in the Greater Kashmir. A columnist responds to the situations and developments as obtained at different junctures and looks at them from his vantage point. Thus despite making an effort to be objective some element of subjectivity creeps in. The book however gives a kaleidoscopic view of Kashmir politics and India-Pakistan relations. It tells how fads and fancies of Kashmir political leaders have been playing with the sentiments of common people.

I thank many of my readers who have been insisting through their letters for preserving the writings that have appeared in various newspapers. I also thank Mr. Ajaz Ahmed of Sheikh Muhammad Usman & Sons who insisted me for publishing of my writings in the form of a book.

20, February 2007

Z.G. Muhammad
Srinagar

Hi Children – This is your tale

Then hues of sky had a meaning. Every shade had its own connotation. Every colour had a story to tell-different tinges told different stories. Different shades of dawn and dusk had different meanings. It was not the aesthetics of colours that filled people's hearts with joy- but it was the fear that had become part of their psyche for centuries that found a manifestation in different hues of the sky. Carmine sky did not make people agog but filled their hearts with awe. It was seen as harbinger of scarlet days. Murky sky filled with darker clouds was seen as forerunner of bad days. It was seen as heralding of yet another bad rule. The rule of oppression, intimidation, terror and subjugation. A gloomy morning was seen as presage of some one having died of exhaustion out of corvee while crossing over peaks leading to Gilgit. Then hovering of wild crows over the skyline dominated with pines would not augur well- it would never make people to think of some wild bore having died but would instill fear in them about someone having starved to death. It reminded them of not being masters of their fields, toil and crop. It reminded them of idle pestles and sealed mortars- as no body could pound paddy without permission from rulers.

The childrens' hearts would never be thrilled on seeing flocks of birds returning to their nests in the evening. Instead it would remind them of some brutish alien ruler who had left indelible scars on the psyche of Kashmiris. At the fall of dusk with flying of crows to their destination known as "kawa yanwol" (crow's marriage) made children cry "Kawa Yanwol Miradadun Bhol Hudian Gool" (crows marriage- May Allah destroy progeny of Mirdad). Mirdad Khan was an Afghan Subedar who had 'imposed unjust taxes.' Cursing and using invectives against the oppressors and

rulers were the only weapons people had to fight with. Mirdad Khan was not the only ruler cursed by children, Kashmiri language is full of phrases, idioms and proverbs that bear testimony to the amount of hatred people had for the alien rulers. I do not know if my friends in Kashmir University have ever worked on etymology of Kashmir proverbs and phrases.

And at the fall of night somberness would be stripped apart by melodious voices of damsels that used to gather in compounds and sing in chorus. The songs of festivity on the eve of both the Eids- but many song would be punctured with laments. These choruses that echoed from the peaks of Zabarwan and Hurmukh were not songs of joy but tales of woe and sufferings at the hands of the alien desperadoes. They were no belle of the ball who sang for rejoicing but they sang for catharsis. The songs would purge the damsels who were advised not to wash faces to save themselves from the prying eyes of lascivious alien soldiers from the awe and fear that had become part of their psyche during the centuries old alien rule. In looking shabbier lied their beauty- clumsiness was then seen as a shield for saving chastity.

Then in wee hours air would be filled with hymns in praise of Allah as taught by founder of our faith Mir Syed Ali Hamadani. The *naats* that would cascade with all cadence and fragrance from mosques contained notes of helplessness- speaking about the subjugation and suppression of people at the hands of alien desperadoes and rulers who ruled the state through proxies or directly. It is not that this suppressed tiny nation that had a glorious past, spreading over thousands of years, had accepted the brutal rulers as something in their stock but they revolted against living in a well like vale from where their voices never traveled outside. There was no doubt that there were many a poor in other faiths but 'poverty of the Muslims was appalling'. Peasants looked like 'starving beggars'. Many who traveled outside to make some living outside the borders of the paradise were consumed by chill and cold of *Pirpanjal*. The Muslims were 'synonymous with the hewers of wood and drawers of water'. A Muslim for his faith was looked down upon as belonging to an 'inferior class.' All taxes were levied on these hapless people and the whole 'brunt of official corruption' had also to be borne by him. The constable and *patwari* (revenue official) were not symbols of authority but emblems of tyranny and oppression.

True, they found a strong voice in an aborigine Sheikh Mohammad Iqbal who not only through the medium of his poetry made plight of

people of this land known to the rest of the world but whose heart always bled after his visit to his native place in June 1921. He played a pro-active role, more than that of a politician, to make the world know plight of Kashmiris. Kashmir dominated his mind and thought much, before his having visited this place in 1909. The year he became the General Secretary of Anjuman-i-Kashmir at Lahore (now in Pakistan). Iqbal's love for the land of his ancestors or his feelings for his brethren was expected, but there have been many other Indians and Europeans who have emerged as stronger voices of Kashmir in the East and the West. Arthur Brinckman a missionary in Kashmir was deeply moved at the plight of Kashmiri Muslims. This man from Berkeley Square wrote a pamphlet in December 1988- "The Wrongs of Kashmir"; yes, this slim pamphlet spreading over just fifty pages is not written in queen's English but it tells a tale of Kashmir- a horrifying tale of a subjugated nation. He gives facts which he believes need to be informed to the people in his country about a country nested in the gossom of Himalayas which he calls as 'ill-fated country.' No doubt he vehemently pleads to British Empire to take over this country from the Dogra rulers to save people from torture. But between the lines the agonizing and painful story of Kashmir sends shivers down the spine. Through this pamphlet he wanted to arouse public opinion, as he believed that this could influence the ministers without 'any of the ranting clamour, abusive spouting, which is the fashion of some disturbers of peace'. Calling Ranbir Singh as a 'weak ignorant prince - a puppet in the hands of his dewans, knowing not what was being done in his name and yet the state of things in Kashmir is the result of his apathy and weakness. The author is highly caustic of the British government for having sold Kashmir and Kashmiris to Dogras through a 'sale deed' against the wishes of the people, 'who were allowed no choice in the matter.

It was not Arthur Brinkman alone who protested against the oppression of Kashmir but there are many other names like Robert Throp and Albino Baneerjee who raised their voices against the cruelty that was being inflicted upon Muslims of Kashmir. Sir Albino Banerjee, a Bengali intellectual of Christen faith serving as Foreign and Political Minister of Kashmir of the Maharaja was disgusted with the state of affairs and resigned on 15 March 1929. Immediately after his resignation he held a press conference and narrated awesome story of Kashmiri Muslims to the world. Calling it the first voice in favour of the Kashmiri Muslims Quid-e-Milat Chowdary Ghulam Abbas in his autobiography writes that Albino ex-

posed the treatment given to the Muslims by the feudal rulers.

There can be no denying that Kashmir history of the recent past has been suffering for expediency of our academicians and scholars and names of the well wishers of people are deliberately omitted but it is a hard fact that history surfaces and resurfaces under many covers. Whether it has been Albion or Brinckman they were intellectually honest. Let my friends in campus before whom I have always been pleading for re-orientation of academics and setting up a chair in the name of Mohammad Din Fauq, an ace and honest journalist and historian of 20th century for conducting research in our recent past realize that it was high time to tear apart expediency and be intellectually honest.

Let us tell our children about the recent past objectively and honestly enabling them to shape their thinking and future.

Of Bitter-Better Days

It was like a small medieval town. Closed to the outside world, waking up to life with first rays of sun breaching through the slits in the rampart and returning to slumber with sun descending down the Kohimaran hillock. With lots of students, youth, middle aged and old political workers pacing the dusty streets this small town behind the ramparts known as the Srinagar Central jail was pulsating with life during 1971. Most of the barracks were filled to their capacity with student detainees, Plebiscite Front workers and Jamat-e-Islami members. The Hospital, the School, the weaver's section and cells for the condemned inside the Jail had been converted into barracks. Separate barracks had been marked for the criminals; but during the day the criminals and the political detainees mixed freely. It would be difficult to differentiate between the criminals and the political workers. Only those of the criminals who had been awarded punishment by the court were seen in the jail uniform. The rest wore normal dress. Ironically some of the criminals were also arrested under the P.D. A, (Preventive Detention Act), an act meant for political prisoners. These criminals were allowed same facilities and allowances as were available for student detainees and political workers. At the dusk when the barracks would be latched, the two tribes could be identified by their pinfold.

It was 1971; the Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front had been banned under the prevention of Unlawful Activities Act, all its offices sealed and all the active members of this organization jailed. This was followed by the arrest of Jammu and Kashmir Political Conference leaders. Some of the Jamat-e-Islami leaders also could not escape the net. The Plebiscite Front

was a mass based state level organization, with its workers mostly poor peasants, vegetable vendors and artisans. It was by and large an organization of the Poor political workers with none to support their families back home. With their best efforts at savings from the jail towards the month they would save a few soaps and some meters of cloth, which they would hand over to their families on the next interview. The office bearers were a bit better off as most of them were drawing sustenance for their families from the Muslim Auqaf trust.

January 12, 1971 order banning the Plebiscite Front had been issued with the objective of preventing its leadership from participating in the forthcoming elections in the Month of March. In the words of Alistair Lamb, "A Plebiscite Front victory in the Lok Sabha seats in Jammu and Kashmir (of which Plebiscite Front declared it intended to contest five out of six) on the kind of platform which Sheikh was not indicating could only promise trouble. On January 7, 1971 Sheikh Abdullah was due to fly to Srinagar but the flight was cancelled owing a false Bomb scare. Next day order of externment was served to Miriza Mohammad Afzal Beg and on January 9, 1971 order of externment were served upon to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his Son-in-Law, Gulam Mohammad Shah. Rest of the rank and file was arrested and put in various jails of the State. The Plebiscite Front leadership and workers in Srinagar Central jail did not seem a fatigued lot, they were braving their poverty with courage and determination. I remember Ghulam Ahmed Ganai, Tehsil President of the Tangamarg unit of the Front, who despite being in sixties had a radiant face. He once said, We will fight for the right to self determination till the last. But patience of some senior leaders of the party had exhausted and they wanted to wriggle out of the chore. I remember three of the Political Conference leaders who were jailed during 1971, Late Gulam Ahmed Mir, Peerzadia Ali Shah and Hafizullah Makdooi. Of the three only Makdooi is surviving and is active in politics. But the progeny of these leaders could not keep themselves away from the political developments and they joined the 'movement' when it was reborn in 1990 and suffered like their parents.

Those days hundreds of youth, mostly in their twenties were seen strolling on the pavements of Srinagar Central Jail. They were from almost all parts of the State Kupwara, Bandipore, Baramulla, Sopore, Verinag, Anantnag, Shopian, Pulwama, Badherwah, Doda, Kishtiwari and Chatroo etc. Most of them had been arrested for their connection with the Al Fatah. Unearthing of Al Fatah was announced by the state police Department on January 18, 1971. Police parties were sent in all direction to arrest

its members. About 250 young men mostly students were picked up and put behind the bars. Ghulam Rasool Zahgeer was leader of Al Fatah. His only son, Yasir, also joined the 'struggle' and was killed by the security forces a couple of years before Zahgeer died of cancer.

Julkha Khana, a barrack meant for weaving of cloth had been converted into a barrack for detained students. It was the focal point of the jail. One of the rooms was used as a mosque. Qasim Sajad, a young-man from Sarnal, Islamabad would give Azan five times a day. The Azan by Qasim Sajad used to be soul stirring. Master Mohammad Abdullah Beg of Lalpull, Uri would lead the prayers and teach Quran to the boys who in their childhood had not learnt it. Master Abdullah was known for his gentleness. He was religious minded and totally apolitical but bubbling with enthusiasm. The smartest of all the Julkha Khana was Hamid Dewani, an immaculately dressed robust youth distinct by his long curled moustaches. From five o'clock in the morning till dusk he would be seen on move. This was his second stint in the jail, this time as a member of the Al Fatah. In 1966 he had been court-martialled for his involvement in the freedom Struggle and sentenced to six years imprisonment which was condoned by the Jail authorities to four years. He would initiate boys towards fitness programme and encouraged them to attend to his exercise classes and play volley ball. He would ridicule boys playing badminton and denounce it as a feminist game. His two other cousins Javed and Arshad had also been arrested for their alleged involvement. But with the passage of time his two cousins faded into anonymity and landed in Government job. They are perhaps retired now. After his release from jail. The Mr. Dewani was feeling totally dejected at the changing posture of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Miriza Mohammad Afzal Beg. Nothing was heard about him after his release in 1972. After six years he again shot in news, when he hijacked an Indian Airline plane from Jaipur to Lahore. What happened to Hamid Dewani, where was he, nobody in Kashmir seemed interested. People forgot him and the media ignored him. People and politicians were feeling dizzy because of their deeper debut in electoral politics. Hamid Dewani a born fighter has joined the Afgan Mujeehidin and is fighting with them in Jalala Abbad, this was made known by Azam Inqalabi in a press Statement. He returned to Kashmir in the year 1990 and organized a group, "Kashmir Freedom Movement". He died of a heart attack in May 1993. Others in the Julaykhana were Mohammad Afzal Hajam, Gulam Mohudin Hajam, Habibullah Lone and Gulam Mohammad Lone (All from Bandipore), Ali Mohammad Sofi, Abdul Gaffar Zaroo – (cashier

in treasury). Ghulam Mohammad Lone was to suffer imprisonment for nine long months in place of some one else of the same name

Naji Munwar a poet from Kapran, Shopian had dedicated his new anthology to two young poets Gulshan Majid and Shafi Shouq for their sufferings and confinements. The two young poets were shy but highly literate. Politics was the least they talked about. They talked about Sigmund Freud, Shakespeare, Shelly, Ghalib, Faiz, Rasul Mir, Mehmood Gami and Abdul Ahad Azad. In one of the rooms its roof lived Ghulam Mohammad Malik, Mahraj Das, Bansi Lal Handoo, Manzoor Ahmed Khaki and Chaman Lal Kantroo, considered to be the most secular. These young Marxists faded into oblivion after 1990. There were some office bearers of the Jammu and Kashmir Young Men's League which included Muhammad Saleem Beg, Abdul Majid Malik and Abdul Rashid Ganai in this barrack. The Young Men's League got divided in 1975. One faction supported Indra-Sheikh Accord and another opposed it. Other prominent young men who very strongly believed in the two nation theory and opposed Sheikh Abdullah with strong conviction were Ghulam Hassan Wani, Abdul Majid Khan and Abdul Hai. Ghulam Hassan after his retirement rejoined politics and others faded into anonymity.

There are many such chapters in our history but they will never be remembered and recorded.

Intellectualism and Political Infidelity

Success story- do we have one to our credit. During the past seventy seven years of our political struggle. I doubt if we have one. All our struggles, I believe met one after another Waterloo. Our story is a story of political failures that spawned nothing but pain and agony for the people. True, there are multiple reasons for the failures of our political struggle but many blame 'Intellectual famine' for these failures.

Is it true that our movements suffered from intellectual famine? Is it true that our Movements right from 1929 suffered one after another setback for lack of an intellectually high leadership? Can it be taken as gospel truth that our movements were not on a very firm ideological pedestal? Can it be taken as out-and-out truth that our leaders were brawny and not brainy? Is it beyond contradiction that our leaders were physically machos and intellectually cowards?

These questions could be important subjects for our contemporary historians. To find an answer to the question, if our struggles suffered for proper intellectual input there is need for looking back:

Most of our historians have been asserting that we had a glorious past. It is ritualistic for all scholars of Kashmir history and culture to talk of our 'glorious past'. Like many of these scholars, I have also on umpteen occasions repeated these assertions. About ten years back in a newspaper column I wrote, "Sorry! We are Not Great People - I had laboured to explode the myth that Kashmiris were intellectually great people and expected a debate on this question but for the atmosphere being fully surcharged those days it did not ruffle any feathers- as then there were no advocates of misconceived and misconstrued Kashmiryat in Srinagar

city. The concept was yet to find a place in the political lexicon of Kashmir. Then talking Kashmiryat then would not inflate your purse and, I think the concept was in its pre-natal stage at New Delhi. It was yet to be tested for its political utility by some fugitive teachers of Kashmir University, serving and retired. I believe it is an illusion that we have had intellectually and academically glorious past. True, Bazaṛ talks about Kashmir's scholarship from Vedic times to Hindu period and Sufi does asserts about scaling of peaks after peaks of scholarship during the period of the Sultans. I am skeptical about our scholarship in the past and even at present. If our ancestors had been intellectually very sound. Some remnants would have remained or traces would have been leftover even if it would have suffered mutation. Kashmiris by and large abhor scholarly pursuits. As a nation they are book-haters, as my editor-in-Chief rightly said that the city of Srinagar is perhaps the first city in the world that has earned the dubious distinction of not having a single bookshop worth the name- true the text bookshops are galore but there is no bookshop where one could quench intellectual thirst. Yes, we had one spacious and genuine bookshop just below Indian Coffee House on the Posh Residency Road, which, over a period of time, had emerged as an icon of Kashmir intellect and a destination for majority of literate class. But its Sikh proprietor after departing from Kashmir and his trusted manger collapsing, it was closed and we lost this only icon of scholarship also. A good business house, trading after in stationary has now opened in its place. There is no major bookshop in the city of one million, with seventy percent educated population. Thanks to Sheikh Usman & Sons for opening now one the Residency Road.

I have no grouse against my leaders of yester years like Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Chaudary Ghulam Abbas, Maulvi Mohammad Yousf Shah, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Maulana Mohammad Syed Masoodi and many others. These captains of our ship not only failed to steer us away from the perilous shoals but moving against the directions of wind pushed us towards troughs and whirlpools. We still continue to be caught up in this whirlpool and day in and day out my apprehension about our ship sinking deeper are becoming stronger. I do not doubt their sincerity but I strongly believe that it was but for their faux pas that people of the state had been plunged into perpetual pain. I do not believe that failure to take right decision at the right moment was deliberate but it was lack of intellectual input in our movement. Majority of these leaders in the twilight of their life realized these mistakes but they felt shy of admitting them publicly. An editor friend of mine calls the leaders of yester years, as

"Unpad", illiterate- I generally take his remark with a pinch of salt, but many times, in my heart of hearts I endorse his generalized remark when I compare them to the Indian leadership. Mohandas Karmchand Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal and Abul Kalam Azad with whom Sheikh Abdullah compared himself wrote books of great value during their detentions. Sheikh Abdullah or Mirza Afzal Beg failed to scribble a sentence during their protracted detention. Instead they reared goats, hens, cocks & pigeons. It is ironical Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who in his public addresses often recited a poem of Maharul Qadiri and believed that it was Dr. Iqbal till he was corrected by Dr. A. Wahid, a physician friend of mine in presence of people like Shameem Ahmad Shameem, G. W. Bawan and many other young lawyers and Coffee House Wits.

It was not Sheikh and Beg only who failed Kashmir struggle- met Waterloo after Waterloo for their myopic political vision. These two by and large had shut windows to their brains and pursued frozen political frames. They never understood the dynamics of politics. Maulana Mohammad Syed Masoodi about whose scholarship many of my friends are convinced, suffered from political logjam. He was so much overawed by Sheikh Abdullah that he did not dare to write a single paragraph that could have helped the posterity to get some political wisdom that could have helped them in drafting a political map for the future. In fact I called on Maulana Syed a couple of times with the request to write his memoirs which had become all the more important after Sheikh Abdullah's biography having been published posthumously with lots of allegations even against his contemporaries. But at every meeting he promised another date, it was but for agility of my friend late Qaiser Mirza (AP) correspondent that I could record Maulana's view on Sheikh Abdullah and Kashmir Accord for forty five minutes. His life could be summed up in two words- 'expediency master'.

If seen in retrospect cause for Kashmir suffering is faux pas' of its leaders which were more a result of lack of intellectual understanding of issues rather than their political infidelity which they are generally blamed for. To talk about older leaders at a time when a whole crop of new leadership is at the centre stage may look out of context but there is a lesson in it- a crisp lesson that intellectual understanding of Kashmir issue is more important than political expediencies dictated by time and situation- even if it means waiting another generation.

The Lion of Kashmir

The cherubic face, the roar, the soaring oratory, the vitality that sparked the sub-continent turned into dust. It was belief in disbelief- the man who looked like a Mongol with his astra-Khan cap; the man who stood like a sky-scraper among his contemporaries, the man who ruled people like the legendary EL-CID in his kingdom went into deep sleep. But his imprint is in 8 September 1982 indelible. There are flash backs and flash-backs within flash backs.

I first heard Skeikh Mohammad Abdullah's name through a Ladi Shah', a troubadour. In late fifties and early sixties Ladi Shah's would be often seen with their iron rod and small iron rings in it going around Srinagar city, singing about trials and tribulations of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. They were the satirists. The role of Ladi-Shah and 'Sazandars' (bards) in creating halo around Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah has been immense. Much more than his Plebiscite Front, my curiosity in this man was aroused through this Ladi Shah. Who is this man they are singing about? I would often ask myself. My family was political and I never dared to broach the subject with my elders. There were very few shops in our mohalla those days. Two shops were my regular haunts during winter vacations. One, of a darner and the second, of a 'Kalai Ghar', (a tinner of copper utensils) I enquired from them, who is Sheikh Abdullah? Today, I realize they had different ideologies, thus they portrayed him differently.

The Darnar, would say, he is a great man. He lived a hard life; he suffered and fought for the people; he was thrown in a boiling oil pan, but God saved him; his name was written on leaves; he fought Maharaja Hari Singh when people were afraid of a Policeman and a Patwari; he abolished

Chakdari and Landlordism; he is pious; he always carries a prayer-mat with him; he hates mullah's because they have exploited people. He would say that Jawaharlal was his friend. Bakshi put him behind the bars because he wanted to be the Prime Minister himself.

The 'Kalai Ghar' would project him in a different language. 'He was a good man when he joined politics in 1931. But later on he lost his tract in 1938. There were better leaders than he Chowdray Ghulam Abbas, Mistri Mohammad Yaqoob, Allah Rakha Sagar and Abdul Rahim Wakil. But unfortunately all of them were from Jammu and could not speak Kashmiri. So they could not make a dent. It all went to the advantage of Sheikh Abdullah. Now, the only person left in Kashmir was Mirwaiz-Molvi Mohammad Yousuf. He was a simple man, but a pious person and a scholar, a novice in political manoeuvring.

With these hazy ideas, I had built an image of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, giant of a man—a phantasmagoria—Wadi Ayoob. One day it happened, I saw people running helter skelter saying Sheikh Sahib has come to Hussain Zargar's house. I ran bare footed to see the giant of a man. I was flabbergasted. I saw a bespectacled person, distinct from the crowd, towering all others around him. My imagination ran wild. I tried to search out his replica in the fairy tales I had heard from my grand mother. Sheikh Sahib had some good workers in the area. Hussain Zargar, Qader Shaksaz and Rehman Darzi were the prominent. One would often hear woeful tales of their miseries. Stories about Qadir Gaddis starvation and his standing by the side of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah would be usually heard. He would usually resonate in the shop of barber in our locality. I first had a glimpse of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, when he came to console the family of Hussain Zargar, who had been arrested along with many other workers of the Palestine Front.

After Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's deposition in 1953, hundreds of political workers, who had faith in his leadership, stood by him. They were a selfless lot. A naked brigade ready to fight at the behest of their leader. Many of them lived penniless lives. Those who survived and braved the death till Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's return to power in 1975 were puzzled about their roles. They got lost in the maze of power politics, they were jostled out by sycophants. Many of them bade adieu to politics and a new crop of political workers emerged on the scene.

With the passage of time the personality of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah became more and more complex for me. Whenever I tried to

understand Sheikh Sahib's personality, it always became intriguing. His role in 1947 was dubious but in one thing he resented Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Like him he was averse to students, participating in politics. His ideas about role of students in politics were crystal clear. I remember two incidents where he made his ideas known to us. It was first in 1973, the dialogue with New Delhi had started. He made a whirlwind tour of the state. Almost every where students were the targets in his speech. He would level different allegations on students. A group of students from the University called on him. Those days there were two prominent factions in the University one was Pro-accord and another anti-accord. It was the pro-accord group of students who met him. The pro-accord group of students tried to plead before him that he had wrong impressions about students. One Parvez Ahmad told him, "we are working for your organisation; we have suffered a lot. Whatever directions Beigh Sahib is giving us we are implementing it". At this Sheikh Sahib became furious, and roared, "students have no business in politics. You should concentrate on your studies. I wonder what Beigh Sahib is doing. Today he helps one group of students to launch some Young Men's League, tomorrow he patronizes Students Unity. Meet and on third day he helps students Popular Front. All these Youth organization worked under the centre of Mirza Afzal Beg. I do not know what benefit does he derive out of this things".

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was deadly against the virus of politics in academic institutions, even when he was out of power. He evinced great interest in the growth of educational institution, and wanted that academic atmosphere should not be disturbed in the educational institutions. In 1974, an unusual thing happened in Kashmir University. All the heads of departments and the Vice-Chancellor of Kashmir University were locked up in a room, students were demanding promotion to the next class without examination. It was an un-reasonable demand. But, there was definite rationale behind this demand. We had joined the university in October 1972 and upto June 1974, no examinations were held. Examinations were being postponed on one pretext or the other. Our batch mates in other universities had completed the masters degree and we were yet to be examined for our previous one. There were four classes in the university, old Final, new Final, old previous and new previous. Government was pursuing the policy of an ostrich, as it had failed to cope up with problems of the educated unemployed. They wanted students to continue in the university as far as possible. Syed Mir Qasim was the Chief Minister. He offered concessions to some of the students to keep them silent. But

Sheikh Sahib was furious at this demand of students. He threatened students, if they did not correct themselves they would have to face wrath/ Some sixty students were arrested and put in different lock ups in Srinagar. Next day we went to meet Sheikh Sahib to correct his impression and put things into the proper perspective before him. As soon as students uttered the words, "Jenab we belong to your party." He lost his temper, I have no party. You are not students. You are hoodlums, I cannot tolerate this kind of discipline in the university. Confine yourself to the studies and even if you want to join politics you should do it after you have finished your studies. Sheikh Sahib did not believe in using students in politics. He hated many a politician who were exploiting students for their ulterior motives.

I had a deep feeling that Sheikh Sahib's personality had gone in my psyche, I contacted a friend of mine Mr. B.G. Koshy, who was then deputy editor of, "The Onlooker", Bombay, to Sheikh Sahib. Mr. Koshy was on a honey-moon trip in Kashmir. We waited for Sheikh Sahib in his lawns. As soon as Sheikh Sahib appeared on the steps of his house, wearing a black velvet Ladakhi Choga, clasping his hands and twiddling his fingers, Mrs. Koshy got up, "who is this man"? When I told her he was Sheikh Abdullah. With a sigh of relief she said, "He looks like the tallest peak of Kashmir."

I would prefer to fade out the flash backs, with the reproduction of one paragraph from Mr. Koshy's article that he wrote on Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. "He reads Koran and prays five times a day-even in his office. Yet he is a secularist in the style of Nehru, albeit a Koran-toting, secularist". (Article was published immediately after the death of Sheikh Abdullah in a Jammu Paper).

Sheikh Abdullah - Naik or Khalnaik?

Fifty one years political career of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah oscillates between agony and ecstasy, triumphs and defeats and success and failures. Many look at him as a Shakespearean hero, suffering from a tragic flaw - 'megalomania', many consider him as Marlowe's hero Dr. Faustus, suffering from lust for power and who bartered away his soul to—attain power. Many look at him as 'Khalnayak' of modern day Bollywood movies. The fact of the matter is that his life has so many dimensions and every dimension is covered with pall of despondency and disappointments. True, he has been relegated to the pages of history and his legacies have been buried under the scarlet history of past sixteen years but he will continue to emerge for student of history as villain-cum-hero. Having seen him roaring as a Lion at Mazar-i-Shoda Srinagar for many years and buckling down to nadir for being in power his life has been a poser to me. Many intriguing questions continue to haunt me. He swam against the tide and stood by the side of India at the most crucial junctures of Kashmir history. He not only endorsed the conditional instrument of accession supposed to be signed by the last Dogra ruler Maharaja Hari Singh but also organized National Conference workers against the Afridis and other tribals from the North West Frontier Province. He hailed landing of the Indian soldiers at Srinagar Airport on October 27, 1947. He crushed the Muslim Conference supporters under heavy military boots. He called Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as his blood relation in the United Nation's Sir Zafarullah Khan called him "a Nehru quisling". He got 'fatwas' from religious scholars for calling himself as sixth article of faith, five being the fundamental articles of faith of a Muslim.

Why despite all his support for New Delhi, he was removed from power and jailed on August 9, 1953? This question always haunted my mind in my childhood. Sheikh would call it betrayal by his friend India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and Deputy Prime Minister of the State Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad.

The Plebiscite Front workers observed this day every year as black day. Many would hoist black flags on their rooftops and electric posts. I remember Plebiscite Front workers would burst crackers in the evening as a mark of protest. Few days before August 9, police would swoop on the Front workers and detain them in police lock ups for a few days. The Plebiscite Front continued to observe August 9, as black day till Sheikh Abdullah was inducted as Chief Minister in 1975. Many believed removal of the Sheikh in 1953 was a part of routine machination of New Delhi. not allowing any for Kashmir leader to gain much of strength. Many others particularly Bakshi supporters blamed Sheikh having deviated from the path he had chosen himself. They would blame him for betraying by embarking on a path that was going to plunge Kashmir into the lap of international conspiracy.

The differences between Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and the Indian Government had started appearing more prominently in early days of 1952. Till Constitution of India finally emerged from the Indian Constituent Assembly and Article one of it described Jammu and Kashmir as integral part of the Union of India Sheikh perhaps believed that he would be a sovereign ruler under the umbrella of India. On 30 April 1951 when Sadar-i-Riyast formally announced that elections for the State Constituents Assembly would be held. And Constituent Assembly would ensure that Jammu and Kashmir would never become just another Indian state. Sheikh Sahib believed that a suitable constitution would give permanence to Article 370 of Indian Constitution and it would be in fact a precursor for total Independence. After Praja Parashad launched agitation in Jammu and demanded abrogation of special status to the state Sheikh was convinced that New Delhi was interested in strengthening its grip over the State. Relation between the State and the Centre were defined under Delhi agreement on July 24, 1952. Hardly one year after Delhi Agreement Sheikh Abdullah was jailed. Whether it was lack of confidence and trust between Sheikh Abdullah's and Delhi that led to his imprisonment is intriguing my mind to this day. Sheikh Abdullah supporters openly blamed Rafi Ahmed Kidwai for having played pivotal role in enacting 1953 coup d'etate con-

spiracy.

In our locality the shop of Muhammad Sultan Hajam, a barber was an important centre of news, gossip and discussions. Most of the newspapers published were available on the shop. Those days very few newspapers were published from Srinagar. The Daily Aftab edited by Kh. Sanaullah Bhat and The Daily Hamdard edited by Ghulam Rasool Aarif were popular newspapers. Other newspapers which included Naya-Sansar and Daily Khidmat toed the official line. There used to be a lot of talk about Sheikh Abdullah in this shop. I remember the proceedings of conspiracy case were circulated by the Plebiscite Front amongst its supporters and people used to read these proceedings with keen interest. Notwithstanding threat of reporting by 'peace brigade goondas' and CID sleuths people used to talk about the Sheikh Abdullah and looked forward for crumbling of conspiracy case against Sheikh under its own weight. Prying eyes of secret agents were focused on every individual. Bakshi had planted moles every where. Even the elite were snooped very crudely. The intelligence system was so crude those days that without cross checking people were put inside lock ups, detained, canned and beaten not in police stations but in the Halqas- local offices of the National Conference by the hoodlums of the party.

The Sheikh had been accused of having conspired with the United State for an Independent Kashmir. I first heard the story about the Sheikh having conspired with the United States for an Independent Kashmir in the barber's shop. My mohalla had lot of DNC workers; in fact it was heart of the DNC activities. From Moti Lal Misiri to G.M. Sadiq every one visited our Mohalla. Many D.N.C. workers were nicknamed as Stalin's, Lenin, Bulgarianians etc after communist leaders. There were lots of discussion in the barber's shop Sheikh Supporters who always outnumbered his critics would praise him for his dream of an Independent Jammu and Kashmir. There can be no denying that the Sheikh dreamt of an Independent state of Jammu and Kashmir; so did many other politicians in the State, including some Communists and Kashmiri Pandit leaders. In fact some Kashmiri Pandit leaders avowedly spoke and wrote in support of Independent Kashmir. Many names like Prem Nath Bazaz, Shyam Lal Yatch, Ragunath Vishnav and Jagan Nath Sathu were heard-supporting the idea of Independent Kashmir- how genuinely, I do not know.

In his countless public speeches I have heard Sheikh Abdullah laying greater emphasis on third option. While demanding holding of plebi-

scite in the state under the supervision of the United Nations he would say that the people of the state should be given an option whether they wanted to remain with Pakistan, India or Independent. Whether Sheikh really had sought any help from the United State for translating his dream of Independent and Sovereign Kashmir into reality always haunted my mind. In 1978, when Henderson Papers were made public R.K. Kak an elderly journalist told me at Srinagar that in September 1950 the United States Ambassador to India, Loy Henderson had secretly visited Sheikh Abdullah. The Sheikh had told Henderson that majority of Kashmir leaders favoured Independent state and even some Azad Kashmir leaders were supporting the idea. Three years later in May 1953, Sheikh talked to American Democratic leader Adali Stevenson in Srinagar on similar lines as he had to Loy Henderson. On Wednesday March 14, 1984, I called on the former Prime of India Morarji Desai in his Philomena apartment on Marine Drive, Bombay to record an interview with him. During my interview I made a reference to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru betraying Sheikh Abdullah and deposing and detaining him in 1953 and called it uncalled for and unjust. In response he replied very tersely "it is not true. I was Finance Minister those days. In fact Pandit Ji showed me some papers which amply suggested that Sheikh was involved in a conspiracy with the Americans for Independent Kashmir. It was amply clear that Sheikh Abdullah during his meeting with Adal Stevenson had sought US assistance for Independence of Kashmir. And those papers are preserved to this day". I wrote a couple of letters to the Director Nehru Museum for providing me an access to these papers. He regretted that there was no policy with the government for declassifying or making these documents Public".

Prominent writer, film maker journalist and Kashmir watcher Khawaja Ahmed Abbas who was close to Prime Minister Nehru looked at 1953 happenings from a different angle. "I think 1953 was a result of misunderstanding. I think Rafi Sahib (Rafi Ahmed Kidiwi prominent Minister in Nehru cabinet) influenced Nehru as he also had misunderstood Sheikh Abdullah. Both subjective and objective factors led to the ouster of Sheikh Sahib in 1953." He told me in an interview, "I do not think there was a personnel element that prompted Rafi Ahmed Kidwi to ensure ouster." About the then Principle Secretary K.M. Kidwi, nephew of Rafi Ahmed Kidwi harboring a personnel grouse against Sheikh he said, "I do not think that Kidiwi Sahib could be influenced by his nephew. Whether the Sheikh had really conspired or just broached the subject with visiting

Americans or it was his revolutionary agrarian reforms which had been disadvantageous to influential Kashmir Pandit landlords that resulted in Abdullah's ouster will continue to be a subject for debate. His unceremonious removal from power and detention added a halo of martyrdom to him. It brought him nearer to people and renewed his popularity amongst the masses. Sheikh Abdullah in detention emerged more powerful than as the Prime Minister of State from 1947 to 1953. Sheikh Abdullah's deposing in 1953, and his demand for implementation of the United Nations Resolutions on Kashmir had brought many of his former adversaries to his camp. Many would adorn their drawing rooms with his pictures. In my childhood I remember having seen his picture adorning the drawing rooms of many people along with the pictures of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal and Muhammad Ali Jinnah's.

I remember having purchased his picture for four annas (twenty five paisa) at Hazratbal and pasting the same on Kitchen wall of our home to the annoyance of my uncle, who hated him for what he called his scores of betrayals.

The question that haunts me is that was it 'faux pas' of Sheikh Abdullah that is responsible for Kashmir tragedy. If 1947, was a 'faux pas' why he repeated it in 1975. In an article sometime back Srinagar based columnist wrote in a newspaper that Sheikh Abdullah despite being called as Lion the of Kashmir was a coward, he suffered from 'premonitions' that propelled his politics. In 1946, he sided with the Congress instead of the League, as he believed that the two nation theory was going meet its Waterloo. In 1947 he supported Nehru as he believed that Pakistan would not survive but when in fifties he saw Pakistan emerging as a power he raised his eyebrows against Nehru and in 1971, when he saw Pakistan dismembered he again looked towards New Delhi which culminated into Kashmir Accord.

QAUID-I-AZAM AND KASHMIR

Mohammad Ali Jinnah is the founding father of Pakistan. His birthday coincides with that of Jesus Christ, so it is celebrated globally. But majority of Pakistanis know nothing about him. His picture on the currency notes of the country is the only introduction they have about father of their nation. His role in the creation of Pakistan and providing a separate country to the Muslims of the South-Asia is hardly discussed by the younger generation. True, he makes his entry into the homes through idiot box but there is hardly any young Pakistani who discusses his political beliefs and economic outlook. There is hardly any one in that country who thinks of translating his dream of democracy into reality. There is hardly any Youngman who has adopted him as a role model. But interestingly he continues to live in many Kashmir homes through proxy. He makes his presence felt in social get-togethers, such as marriages, condolence meetings etc.

Politics is the most predominant theme in social-gatherings in Kashmir. Discussions starting from soaring prices of carrots and turnips end up in politics. Discussion over frequent power cuts boils down to the question of accession of the State with the Indian Union. Discussions over rape of minor daughter and mother in Kupwara leads to debate over Sheikh Abdullah's role in 1947. Discussion over accession of the State with Indian Union and prevailing political uncertainty spawns questions like; if Qaid-e-Azam had not alienated Sheikh Abdullah in 1942 by supporting the Muslim Conference; or if Sheikh Abdullah had not bartered away his soul to Jawahar lal Nehru much before the Qaid's visit to Kashmir or if Mirwaiz Yousaf Shah would not have divided the Muslim Conference; many

other questions about the accession of the state; role of the United Nations; the Qaid's death and Governor Ghulam Mohammad's role in selling interests of Kashmir dominate public discussion in Kashmir even after 57 years after his death.

Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah is much more talked about in Kashmir than in Pakistan. His pictures along with that of Dr. Mohammad Iqbal would religiously adorn the drawing rooms of majority of Kashmir houses till 1990. They were only removed after the security forces conducting searches of the houses tormented the people and forced them to remove them from the walls of their rooms. Pakistan President General Parvez Musharaff may or may not know that Qaid-e-Azam has played a significant role in Kashmir Freedom struggle as he had played in the creation of Pakistan. He may or may not be conversant with the nuances of Kashmir Movement for reassertion which started in 1922. He may or may not be aware that this movement cannot be divorced from the movement of the Muslims of the Sub-Continent but fact of the matter is that Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah lives in Kashmir even today.

Kashmir Freedom Struggle was born in Lahore in mid twenties with many important intellectuals of Punjab particularly of Kashmiri origin debating and discussing the cumbersome and cruel tax system of the Dogra ruler Maharaja Hari Singh and plight of Kashmiri Muslims. The Punjab press protested over the atrocities being committed against the Muslims of the state, it appealed to the conscience of the intellectual to rise against the Dogra rulers. Many an important Muslim intellectuals from Punjab visited Kashmir to see for themselves the predicament of Kashmiri Muslims.

The people's resentment against the Dogra rulers took an organized shape in 1931. The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was born. The birth of the Muslim Conference was an extra-ordinary event. It was for the first time that the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir united under one banner. This organization attracted the attention of Muslim intelligentsia all over the sub-continent and its support base widened and it went beyond the State- then known as a country. It got a tremendous response and support from the Muslim press in Punjab. Lahore became a bastion of Kashmir struggle. To muster support for Kashmir struggle for freedom Muslim intellectuals of Punjab (majority of Kashmir origin) under the leadership of Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal constituted "Kashmir Committee". It was because of the hard labour put in by this Committee that the proces-

sions and demonstrations all over the Sub-Continent in support of Kashmir Freedom Struggle and against the mayhem of July 13, 1931. All India support for the struggle changed the attitude of The British Empire towards the State and it started building pressure against the rulers to introduce some reforms in the State.

Birth of this organization ruffled feathers of the feudal rulers and some elite Kashmiri Pandits. The Kashmiri Pandits who were the most pampered of the rulers felt threatened at the awakening in the majority community, which mostly comprised of an exploited lot of peasantry and workers. They conspired and were successful in dividing the Muslim Conference. Divisions infringed the psyche of Kashmir Muslim society. Instead of fighting the feudal rulers, the Muslims particularly, in Srinagar city, started fighting each other. This division send shockwaves to Kashmir Committee in Lahore. Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, who had played pioneering role in waking up Kashmiris from deep slumber, was deeply pained at the infighting amongst the Kashmiri Muslim. To forge a unity amongst them, he wanted to visit Kashmir. He applied for permission but was not allowed. And it was at his behest that intellectuals like Munishi Siraj-ud-Din, Prof. Alim-ud-Din and Mohammad Din Fauq visited Kashmir to bring a rapprochement between Sheikh Abdullah and the Mirwaiz. But the efforts of the Punjab Muslim intelligentsia failed to unite the two factions of the Muslim Conference. The Muslim Conference under the leadership with active support from Choudary Ghulam Abbas went from strength to strength and the Azad Muslim Conference died with a whimper.

It was not only Dr. Iqbal alone who was deeply involved in Kashmir politics but Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah despite his pre-occupation with the struggle for Pakistan played a prominent role in propelling Kashmir towards its right and logical conclusion.

'In mid-thirties Sheikh Abdullah under the influence of some Kashmiri Pandits slipped into the Congress lap. His meeting with Jawaharlal Nehru at Lahore and then travelling with him to North West Frontier province metamorphosed Sheikh Abdullah's thinking resulting in yet another division in the Muslim Conference. Sheikh Abdullah launched the National Conference. In fact this organization was an extension counter of All India National Congress. The Muslim Conference was almost reduced to a skeleton and it was only after 1940 that this organization was revived. The Muslim Conference and the National Conference supporters instead of fighting the Dogra ruler fought amongst themselves. The division amongst

Kashmir Muslims became a cause of concern for Qaid Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Notwithstanding the fact that Pakistan being in making his presence being required in Delhi with a sole intention of forging unity amongst Kashmir leaders, Qaid Visited Kashmir. On May 8, 1944 he arrived at Jammu via Sailkot and all along from Jammu to Srinagar he was greeted by surging crowds. On May 10, 1944 he was accorded a grand reception both by the National Conference and the Muslim Conference. The Qaid advised the Sheikh against toeing the Congress line. He told him that his hair had not turned grey in sun; it was out of experience with the Congress that he was suggesting him to be out of their dragnet. The Sheikh, towards end of his life admitted it to an Indian Express Correspondent that he had regrets of not having acted on Jinnah Sahib's advice. True, Qaid-I-Azam could not forge unity between the National Conference and the Muslim Conference but it had catastrophic impact on the National Conference. The Muslim Conference which had a strong base in Jammu struck firm roots in Kashmir valley also and this frustrated the Sheikh and he started indulging in disgraceful acts. Qaid Azam left on July 25, 1944. His one and a half month stay in Kashmir had sent disturbing signals to the leaders of the All India Congress. The Congress leaders deputed communist ideologues in hordes to Srinagar and it were the Communists who tried to give a new content to the National Conference politics and coined the slogan of 'quit Kashmir'. To offset the influence of Mohammad Ali Jinnah from Kashmir Politics, Maharaja was advised by Congress leaders to arrest the Muslim Conference leaders. The arrest of entire Muslim Conference cadre had an adverse effect on the Freedom Movement. The organization got weakened once again after the Mirwaiz Mohammad Yousaf Shah fought over appointment of Choudary Hamidullah as an acting President of the Muslim Conference. Had not the leaders of the Muslim Conference and the National Conference engaged themselves in strife or had not the Mirwaiz objected to the appointment of Choudary Hamidullah as President of the Muslim Conference, the situation would have been different and perhaps the Kashmir dispute would not have taken birth.'

There is no evidence of the Qaid having spent so much of time in any of the United Indian state for welding together the divided Muslim leadership. Kashmir was the testing ground for the two ideologies that were being pursued by two major political parties of the state. Notwithstanding two nations based on these two ideologies having tumbled into comity of nations Kashmir continues to be the testing ground for these ideologies.

QAID-I-KASHMIR

Contemporary Kashmir politicians irrespective of their affiliations are apathetic towards their past and indifferent to the sacrifices offered by the people of the State. They are different than those who led the freedom movement from 1931 to 1947. The difference is manifold: One, they have so far failed to fuse the public sentiment and give it an appropriate direction, two, they have failed to mobilize indigenous resources for sustaining the movement as was done in the past by organization like the Muslim Conference and the National Conference, three, their eyes remain glued to New Delhi and some European embassies in the Capital; four they depend much for advice from some Delhi based activists and many a time draft policies and programmes in tune with their advices, five, every one of them has his own coterie, six, for information about the political developments they depend on hanger-ons, six, they are averse towards looking for a solution of the Kashmir problem in its historical perspective, seven they are interested in mobilizing resources for building castles and purchasing limousines and above all they hate immediate history of Kashmir and are not ready to learn from the failures and successes of the heroes of yester years who led the movement for 'self-assertion' with commitment and dedication.

Better not to talk about the luxurious style of some of them who are known faces in some of five star hotels in Delhi and Bombay. But what pains me the most is apathy of some of the politicians who claim to be legal heirs of the Kashmir Freedom Struggle.

The year 2004 marks the centenary of Chowdary Ghulam Abbas, founder of struggle against feudal and autocratic rule in Jammu

and Kashmir. Born in February 1904 he graduated from the Punjab University. In 1922 he revived Young Men's Muslim Association founded in 1909, which had lost its vibrancy as a political organization. In 1924 he became the President of this Association. The Association played a pivotal role in infusing a new life in the Kashmir Freedom Movement, which was in its infancy at that stage. Jammu province at that particular point of time had substantial Muslim population and ratio between the Hindus and the Muslim was almost 55:45 percent. It was only after the massacre of 1947, which Sheikh Abdullah for his vested interests played down that population of the Muslims in this province diminished. Chowdary Ghulam Abbas not only brought about wedlock between the Reading Room Party and the Young Muslim Association of Jammu but also he was one among the founders of the Muslim Conference. He emerged as its most towering leaders. Unlike Sheikh Abdullah who was popular in Kashmir valley only. He was perhaps the only Kashmir leader whose support was extended from hilly tract of Northern areas to the Southern plains of Jammu. History bears testimony that Chowdary Ghulam Abbas protested with full vigour against the sacrilege of the Holy Quran, preventing an Imam from delivering Friday Khutaba and banning of prayers in Jammu. This caused a widespread resentment amongst the Muslims all over the State. The Young Men's Association issued big printed posters about these incidents and these posters were sent all over the State. In Kashmir the Reading Room Party arranged to paste them in Srinagar through their own volunteers. It was by virtue of Coordination between the Young Men's Association and the Reading Room party that converted the muffled resentment against the autocratic, biased and tyrant Hindu rulers into a movement, which erupted like a volcano on 13 July 1931, outside Srinagar Central jail. Notwithstanding Mirwaiz Maulvi Mohammad Yousaf Shah departing from the Muslim Conference in 1932 only and launching his own Azad Muslim Conference, which failed at the take off stage, Chowdary Ghulam Abbas played immense role in establishing Muslim Conference units in the rugged and remote areas of the State. The cause of Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir was more sacred to him. It was he who introduced Sheikh Abdullah to the Muslims of Jammu, Poonch, Muzzfarabad and Northern areas and projected him as the voice of Kashmir. But, no sooner did the Sheikh join hands with the Congress leadership he bade farewell to him.

The Muslim Conference politics received a setback in 1939 when Sheikh Abdullah converted it into the National Conference. Chowdary

Abbas refusing to succumb to the arm twisting politics of Sheikh Abdullah revived this organization. Such was influence of Chowdary Ghulam Abbas in Jammu province that not a single Muslim delegate from Jammu attended the National Conference Convention at Sopore. After fully reviving Muslim Conference in 1940, with Mohammad Din Fauq as its president he played an important role in bringing it close to the Muslim League. In May 1944 Qaid Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah arrived in Kashmir on the invitation of Chowdary Ghulam Abbas the Qaid stayed in Kashmir for about two months. He was accorded rousing reception right from Salkot to Srinagar. Surging crowds greeted him. Qaid addressed an historic convention of the Muslim Conference in Jamia Masjid. There is an ample evidence that the visit of Qaid Azam to Kashmir and his whole hog support to the Muslim Conference frustrated Sheikh Abdullah. He indulged in petty politics and in Srinagar city he tried to play up the traditional rivalry between his and Mirwaiz's supporters. But visit of the Qaid undoubtedly took wind of the sails of the National Conference and it were the Communists like BPL Bedi who asked the Sheikh to raise 'quit Kashmir' slogan. This helped the Sheikh to re-establish his credibility to an extent. Had not Sheikh-Congress-Maharaja trio worked in tandem and arrested Chowdary Ghulam Abbas, Allah Rakha Sagar, Mistri Mohammad Yaqoob and Mohammad Yousaf Qureshi the Sub-continental politics would have been different.

Today, this hero of our contemporary history is totally forgotten. Two of the constituents of Hurriyat Conference claim to be the inheritors of the Muslim Conference politics in Jammu and Kashmir, one, the Jammu and Kashmir Awami Action Committee headed by Maulvi Umer Farooq and second, the Muslim Conference headed by Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat. There are no two opinions that when Awami Action Committee was founded it was believed to be the Muslim Conference reborn and its constitution was closer to that of the Muslim Conference of 1947. Equally when the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference tumbled into the universe out of the debris of Alfath it was thought by many that this organization was the real inheritor of the Muslim Conference politics but this organization got atomized into as many factions as its members. Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat after his dismissal from Government Service launched a namesake of the party and had nothing common with it except linkage with Sardar Abdul Qayoom Khan. But, none of the three parties have ventured to remember the founder leader of the Kashmir's freedom struggle. The apathy of these Kashmir leaders towards Chowdary Abbas is in-

dicative of political bankruptcy of these organizations. Chowdary Abbas was amongst the first lawyer of the state to have joined the movement in 1931, the Bar Association in that capacity could think of observing his anniversary by organizing seminars about this legendary man of Kashmir Struggle.

Ghani Lone as I knew him.

It was perhaps August 1971; there was a lot of vivacity in the surly and sullen surroundings of the Srinagar Central jail. Barracks were being done up. Small roads connecting various barracks, school and hospital were being repaired. Prisoners in coarse white uniform and under trials were sweeping and watering the roads. Superintendent central jail, G.M. Shah accompanied by a host of jail staff, including Chief Warden, Ghulam Mustafa Beg and Head Warden Kabir was supervising the cleanliness. All these preparations were ahead of the visit of the then Education and Health Minister, Abdul Gani Lone.

Srinagar central jail at this time was packed to the full. Those inside the jail included leaders and workers of the banned Plebiscite Front, Jammate-Islamia, Communist Party (Marxist Leninist), students and criminals. Majority of the political leaders and students had been detained under Public Safety Act (PSA). Ironically, most of the known burglars and pick-pockets had also been detained under this act. Student detunes out numbered workers of other political parties. The Plebiscite Front and the Jammate workers were satisfied with the arrangements inside the jail and always maintained good rapport with the jail authorities but students were always up in arms against the jail authorities and on a couple of times the agitation assumed ugly dimension. Like many other friends I also used some of the constables for smuggling letters for newspapers. Majority of my letters were smuggled by constable Arjan Nath and Mohammad Sidiq. Many of my letters about conditions inside the jail were published in the Daily Aftab. My letter about pitiable conditions inside the jail published in the Indian Express caused a lot of furor and invoked harsh reaction from the

government. I do not know if the visit of the minister had anything to do with the media reports or not but majority of the students were convinced that the visit had been prompted by editorials in vernacular newspapers the Daily Aftab and the Daily Hamdarad.

The news about the visit of the minister caused lots of ripples in otherwise weird and bizarre settings of the jail. The visit became topic for discussion almost in every barrack. The barrack behind the weaving centre popularly known as *Jula-Khana* became hub of activities. This barrack had four cubicles. Those living in these cubicles were Ghulam Mohammad Malik of the Communist Party, Chaman Lal Kantroo, Gulshan Majid, Shafi Shouq, Manzoor Khaki of Degree College Anantnag, Late Abdul Rashid Mitha, Parveez Ahmed, Nissar Ahmed, Bansi Lal and Mahraj Das of S.P. College; Ghulam Hassan Wani G.Mohammad, Abdul Majid Khan of Islamia College, Mohammad Saleem Beg and Abdul Rashid Gani of Gandhi Memorial College Srinagar, and Arshad Khatlani, Javeed Najeeb, Ghulam Mohudin Hajam, Mohammad Afzal of Degree College Sopore. Majority of the students in this barrack nursed radical political ideas and looked at the visit of the Minister as an insult. Notwithstanding having different political outlooks consensus amongst the students was to protest against the Minister visit to the jail.

To prevent students organizing a joint protest against the Minister, jail authorities latched different compartments of the jail. The main door leading to *Jula-Khana* was locked. It was perhaps at mid-noon that the Minister, accompanied by the then Home Secretary, Ghulam Mohammad Mir, popularly known as Mir Tawoos, arrived at the barrack. He was confronted by agitated youth with many complaints against mismanagement inside the jail. The students blamed the government for jeopardizing their educational career by preventing them from appearing in the examinations. Late Abdul Rashid Mitha was most vociferous and agitated against the maltreatment of the inmates particularly the students. The contrary to our expectations the Minister did not react but heard very patiently and he even snubbed the Home Secretary for reacting harshly to the allegations made by the students and told him to inculcate habit of listening to others.

It was in fact my first encounter with Mr. Abdul Gani Lone. In spite of rebel in me and hatred for the establishment I saw some sparkle of leadership in him. His robust health, black curly hair and rustic demeanor had an aura of its own. What I admired in him at that time was his courage. He faced hostile students without a ruffle on his face and exhibited a lot of

enthusiasm to enter into a dialogue with students. The question of denying students appearing in the examinations at their respective examination centers caught his attention. He immediately asked accompanying Home Secretary to take appropriate steps for holding examinations of all detained students. Consequent upon Mr. Lone's visit to the Central jail, it was decided that for detained students examination centers would be set up inside the Central jail. This decision saved the career of hundreds of detained students. Amongst the detained students only a very few continued with politics. Majority of the detained students later on bade farewell to politics and joined different state services. Seen in retrospect but for Mr. Lone's intervention the state would have lost some good academicians, scholars, officers and teachers. It may sound ironical but it is a hard reality the majority of the jailed students, after their release, turned his votaries. Many stood by his side after he resigned as Minister in G.M. Sadiq's cabinet and even joined his political party the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference.

My second encounter with Mr. Lone has been bitterer than the first one in the Central jail. It was perhaps middle of 1973, the Governor of the State. Mr. Baghwan Sahi had been transferred from the state. The Kashmir University had organized a farewell party for its chancellor and it was perhaps the first and the last farewell party of the university in which students had been invited. A group of students mainly those associated with the National Students Union of India were his ardent supporters in the campus. Majority of the students in this group belonged to Mathematics and Physics Departments of the University. There were a very few students from the adjacent Regional Engineering College who also avowedly supported him. Majority of the students in the campus were against the Pradesh Congress and supported Sheikh Abdullah for his espousing the cause of right to self determination. These students supported the Education Minister for petty gains like financial assistance from the government and free educational tours. Seen in the strict sense these students had no political or social commitment. To win support in the University and other educational institutions the state government sponsored tour of some vociferous and prominent students which included Naseem Ahmed Kawa, Khurshid Ahmed, Farooq Sidiqi, Idrees Shahdad and Javeed Jalib to neighboring country Afghanistan. On their return these students became social out castes amongst the student community. Sponsoring of this trip by the government was seen as a political corruption by majority of the students and it generated lot of resentment amongst the stu-

dents' community.

No doubt, as Education Minister, A.G. Lone had been in a position to muster some support in some important colleges and the University but by and large the student community had not approved of his politicizing of the educational institutions. There was pent up resentment against him and like a dormant volcano it suddenly erupted on the occasion of the Chancellors farewell party. Those of the students who played important role in disrupting the farewell party were Abdul Rashid Wani, Ghulam Mustafa, Sheikh Mustafa (popularly known as Tika), Nazir Ahmed Mir, Ghulam Jeelani Ashia, Abdul Hamid, Wali Mohammad, Syed Arshad Hussain, Manzoor Ahmed, Iftikhar Ahmed and many others whose names time has erased from my memory.

The students were infuriated by his alleged statement in Bombay reported in a local Newspaper in which he had stated that article 370 of the Indian Constitution guaranteeing special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir had lost its relevance and it should be thrown into sea. I had no knowledge about the student's resentment having been engineered by some politician or political party. More than one and a half decade later when he launched the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Party. I enquired from him in an interview for the onlooker, Bombay about his alleged statement against article 370 in Bombay. He not only contradicted the statement in very strong words but narrated the whole story candidly: 'Congress had some important editors and correspondents on its payroll. The then Works Minister had been assigned the job of meeting the requirements of the journalists which had enabled him to establish a good rapport with many of them. The paper that had reported the story had been receiving monthly Rupees six thousand monthly from the party. A Doctor relation of this journalist had been transferred to Karnah then in District Baramulla. The journalist wanted me to transfer him back to Srinagar. My refusing to accommodate his request coupled with the dirty trick by my cabinet colleague was the reason for reporting my statement out of context.' Having known him thoroughly for past many years I believed his every word.

I along with other students had played key role in disturbing the farewell party which forced the Minister and others to flee from the campus. No doubt Lone suspected hand of the Plebiscite Front President Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg behind the whole drama that was enacted on the lawns of the Kashmir University, but fact of the matter is that only one student, Abdul Rashid Wani, was a Plebiscite Front worker and all other

students who played a role in disturbing the Chancellor's farewell party were not in any way connected with any of the political party in the State. Student's mood enabled him to come to terms with the ground realities. It also played a catalytic role in his resignation from the ministry after a few months.

Mr. Lone shifted to a "custodian House" at Gagribal after his quitting from the ministry. Despite my subscribing to a different political outlook I had an appreciation for his simple living and pastoral demeanors. The Pradesh Congress despite being a mix up of socialists, N.C. fugitives, Muslim Conference renegades and political opportunist had its own culture. Notwithstanding it being dominated by the socialists and communists majority of its leaders sang in tune with the party leadership at New Delhi. A.G. Lone was distinct in the Congress crowd for his self respect. He was against political bossism. He never considered New Delhi as his constituency but steadfastly believed that his strength was in his own people.

How Mr. Lone graduated from the Indian pro-politics to pro-right and then to self-determination politics would make an interesting reading if researched honestly. Since because of my departure from the state in early eighties, I lost track of his politics but I remember the day when his house was blasted and he had providential escape from getting buried under the debris of his house, a peoples League leader who perhaps had accused him in the past of —pro-India entering the room Lone bursted, "I will prefer death and not surrender."

I Love My Leaders

I love my leaders. True they are in multitudes. Multitudes may smack hyperbolic. There is more than a battalion of them. What makes them different than a battalion of army is that they are not in one uniform, nor do they march in unison. They are in different costumes- costumes of all shapes and shades – tunics and jeans, brocades and denims, designer dresses and casuals. Some wear turbans reminding me of leaders of blockbuster Hollywood movie “ Khartoum”- about the great epic battle of Sudanese against the British colonists during the Victorian period with Charlton Heston, Laurence Oliver, Richard Jhonson and Ralph Richardson in lead roles. I do not know if my ‘turbaned’ leaders have seen this great movie on Mehdi and his heroic battle against the British. I wish they could have seen this great drama on celluloid. Perhaps they would dream of reliving that role.

Some drape themselves in Quaid’s dress- Sheerwani-Pyjama and astrakhan cap- they may not replicate him but they do resemble great Hollywood actor Christopher Lee who played Quid’s role in a film released as a part of centenary celebrations of the great South-Asian leader. Some wearing angelic white Kurata- Pajama and waistcoats do resemble Umar Mukhtar, as played by veteran Hollywood actor Anthony Queen in famous international film the Lion of Desert. Many in denims and T-Shirts look like characters from famous Hollywood mega-hit of mid sixties on the Algerian War of Liberation the Lost Command with Anthony Queen in the lead. And many dress themselves as Trotskyites of my youth days- Cohen Bandit of France and Ali Tariq of East Pakistan- or progressive youth of seventies dotting JNU campus wearing Khadi Kurata-Pajama, Kohlipori Chappels and cotton shawls slinging from shoulders.

No matter what their costumes are- I love them- I love the full battalion for their simplicity and ignorance and even political naivety. True, it is unilateral love affair – as Kashmiri saying goes '*Misa Mir Ashaq Sunderini Paiye*'. I have dreams about them. Like a lover I have my dreams about my leaders- what Shelly called "Dream of Unknown"- I wish them to carry the hot balloon they are in and crossover the bottomless chasm without allowing a leak developing in it.

Like me, generation before me also loved their leaders. They believed in them. There are so many tales about the admiration of people for their leaders. The oral tradition is brimming with stories of hero-worship- those squatting on the lawns of mosques in old city have many tales to tell. Some of the tales look like having been taken out from the Greek legends where devotees put themselves on alters to please their gods. As moths to taper so they sacrificed their lives for them. It was not the blind faith in the mythological power of these leaders that made people to offer their lives for them but it was the belief that they were fighting heroic battles for taking us out of the centuries old pain and agony. They believed in Qadeer- some unknown Pathan butler when he raised his voice against the autocratic rulers and suffered incarceration. To express their solidarity with them they allowed bullets to pierce their chests. They stood like a rock by his side- till he mysteriously vanished in the thin air. Had he stayed - stayed back he would have emerged as the David who slain philistine giant Goliath.

They loved their religious leaders and believed every word spoken by them as a gospel truth. Not to speak of having faith in the towering religious leaders they even believed in smalltime religious preachers nicknamed *Keswazkhans* – who were as ignorant about religions as ordinary Kashmiri but had learnt the art of playing at the sentiments of people and making them weep thus giving them some catharsis. I have not seen Mirwaiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah Sahib- he had left couple of years before my birth. My physician friend who admires him a lot says that he was the most respected of all leaders and it was but for his edict that people revolted against the autocratic rulers. I believe that his blessing was important for launching any movement in Kashmir. It was not for launching of the Muslim Conference or the sustenance of the movement launched by the Muslim Conference that his blessings were needed but even Jammate-Islami leaders sought his support for launching a unit of the party which was then a purely religious organization. Yousuf Sahib, he was popularly known continued to be the most loved leader even after his having de-

parted to Azad Jammu and Kashmir. I remember my childhood days when I would often see old women sobbing and weeping on the Southern side of the Jamia Mosque near the five step podium where from he used to deliver Friday sermons. Mirwaiz was undoubtedly darling of his supporters, they loved his scholarship, simplicity and honesty but many a times I question myself are these qualities sufficient for being a successful politician. I question my self if he had learnt the art of politics which is essential for a politician, the scene might have been different. Many a time I question myself- did he reciprocate immense love shown by people towards him by departing to Pakistan and leaving the Muslim Conference cadre to be swallowed by the tidal waves that followed the installation of Sheikh Abdullah in 1947.

The centuries old repression, exploitation and slavery had made people to look even at smalltime leaders as Percy Blakeney of Scarlet Pimpernel fame. Not to speak of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah who ventured the courage of raising his voice against tyrant and repressive autocratic Dogra rulers they believed in the dwarfs in his party. People pinned all hopes in this man who was distinct even by his six feet two inches height. He looked larger than life to an ordinary peasant who had lived through brutal *Begar*. He looked as the most towering character from the pages of history. To see their dream of freedom from centuries old subjugation realized they created a cult figure out of him and myths were woven around him. An ordinary Mohammad Abdullah of Soura Kashmir, a school teacher, was metamorphosed into the Lion of Kashmir- a man of extraordinary courage and determination. This metamorphosis was not on its own; people had offered innumerable sacrifices to make him so. On his every detention people had suffered batons and bullets, many were killed. The question that haunts me most is; that did he live to people's expectations or did he betray their faith. Had people offered sacrifices for his reaching an agreement with Maharaja Hari Singh in 1947 and assuming the office under his tutelage? Had people created a cult figure out of this ordinary school teacher for pushing them from centuries old servitude into yet another era of uncertainty? Had people offered sacrifices for enabling him to relish good culinary at Teen Maurti House and nodding for landing of Indian troops in Kashmir? People undoubtedly did not sacrifice their lives on August 9, 1953, for his deposition, but they believed that he had realized his mistakes of 1947 and was going to correct them, little knowing that there was yet another story of betrayal up his sleeves. I do not know whether the generation before me was remorseful

for the extraordinary love that they had shown for their leaders which inflated their ego bordering on megalomania.

Like my early generation I also love my elders- they had few to love but I love them more than others. But the question that haunts me is are these leaders, draped in different costumes going to reciprocate my love with the same love or they are going to betray my trust as their predecessors did?

Of Sons and Daughters in Politics

Some twenty eight years back Dr. Farooq Abdullah, who was then getting ready for being catapulted into politics more by his mother than by his father, told me in an interview that the politician's children had an advantageous position over others as they were in "thick of things" and had an opportunity of gaining the 'experiences' much faster than others and learning tricks of trade for utilizing those experiences". He very strongly believed that it is the politicians' sons and daughters who have a future in Indian political system. The young rebel in me at that time looked at his statement with skepticism. At that time I looked for a greater role in my young friends Fazal-Haq Qureshi, Ghulam Rasool Zahgeer, Dr. Ayoub Thakur, Mohammad Altaf Khan (Azam Inqalabi), Sheikh Tajmul-Islam, Abdul Majid Pathan, Dr. Abul Ala, Musdiq Aadil and many other young men who were then voices of dissent and symbols of resistance.

It was a period when sons of three important politicians of India Sanjay Gandhi son of the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indra Gandhi, Kanti Desai son of Morarji Desai, towering Opposition leader and later on Prime Minister of India and Suresh Ram son of Babu Jigjivan Ram dominating Dalit leader in the Congress were in headlines for wrong reasons. Sanjay Gandhi's chichi, flamboyant and brutish style of working would attract screaming headlines. Notwithstanding his arrogance, style of working and over-riding behaviour many journalists including some big names turned out to be his cronies. Hordes of people at the rate of Rs. 1.50 per person were hired to rent the air with slogans like, "Desh Ka neta Sanjay Gandhi". Entire state machinery was geared to create an aura and halo of leadership around Nehru's grand son. Despite all out efforts by Sanjay Cronies within the Congress Party and some top ranking journalists including the Illustrated Weekly editor Khushwant Singh to promote his political career the Indian

nation was not ready to accept the what the biographer of Sanjay Gandhi and "Today's Outlook" editor Vinod Mehta called as the "Sanjay Phenomenon". The Indian psyche inspite of being enamored by cultism was not ready to accept sons of politicians as the leaders of people.

People resisted the new political phenomenon. Majority of press turned hostile against these politician children. Voices of discord against the new phenomenon echoed from the University campus. The Sanjay Phenomenon failed to strike the roots and in the process of promoting political career of his son Mrs. Gandhi owns future was imperiled. She was put into a dock within her own party and this iron lady of India collapsed under the weight of mother-affectionateness. Her desire to foist her son on people of India brought her to the brink of political disaster by imposing the emergency in the country. Kanti Desai another son not as much in news as Sanjay proved disastrous for his father, Morarji Desai. Morarji minus his 'urine theory' was India's top most politician who refused to swim with the socialist tide of Nehru and had greater acceptability in the West for his capitalist outlook. Kanti Desai's business interests with shove from his father invited editorials from prominent dailies and virtually put Morarji on defensive. Another son whose political ambitions proved devastating to the political career of his father was Suresh Ram. The lasciviousness and sauciness of Suresh Ram provided covers for many lesser known newsmagazines and multiplied their circulation overnight. His political and social demeanor proved disastrous for Babu Jigjavan Ram and the news magazine 'Onlooker' commented that it had "finished". It was in this inhospitable situation for the children of politicians that Sheikh Abdullah propelled his son Dr. Farooq Abdullah. But unlike other politicians he gained public acceptability for the installation of his son by organizing a huge public rally at Iqbal Park.

Farooq's installation was seen as perpetuation of a 'dynasty rule' in the state. But fact of the matter is that there was not much of resistance against it within the National Conference and outside it. Whether the Sheikh was justified in installing his son or not, but Farooq Abdullah very recently in an interview told me though his father was against his joining politics yet he was adamant for joining it. Whether Farooq was a success or a big flop in politics is a different question but he, in a way, is a trend setter in the state politics. He paved a way for the sons and daughters of politicians to push out 'genuine' political workers out of politics. He even made them take a recluse and occupy coveted positions. Those that raised hoarse voice against the 'dynasty rule' also fell in a line with them. In late

seventies and eighties Mufti Mohammad Syed was the greatest drum beater against foisting of Farooq Abdullah on the people of Kashmir. He made best use of his friends in Partap Park flats (which were allotted to them by him in seventies as Deputy Minister) to write against perpetuation of 'dynasty rule'. But in nineties the sting of perpetuating his dynasty in Kashmir politics turned out stronger in him by launching a party for promoting political career of his daughter. He was more luckier than many other politicians as he found "stouter allies for his idea".

Whether Farooq Abdullah was right in his assertion that the Politicians children have an edge over others or not is matter of study but fact of the matter that what I would term as 'political monarchy' and not 'oligarchy' struck its roots in Kashmir much before than it did in Delhi. The political scene in Kashmir is dominated by sons and daughters of the politicians. There is hardly any political party whether supporting accession with India or demanding right to self-determination which is not headed by a politician son or daughter. The National Conference is headed by Umar Abdullah the son of Dr. Farooq Abdullah, the Peoples Democratic Party is headed by Mehbooba Mufti, the daughter of Mufi Mohammad Syed, the Pradesh Congress is headed by Peerzadia Mohammad Syed, the Nephew of Peer Hasim-U-Din, the Awami Action Committee is headed by Mirwaiz Mohammad Umar Farooq, the son Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq, the Peoples Conference is headed by Sajad Ghani Lone, the son of the slain leader, Abdul Ghani Lone, Peoples Conference (II) is headed by Bilal Ghani Lone. There are many other sons and daughters in the political parties whose parents have been taking active part in the promotion of political career of their children. About children of majority of pro-right to self determination leaders it cannot be said that it were the circumstances that propelled them towards politics. Umar Farooq was good at mathematics and wanted to be at top as a computer engineer along with his cousin and lead a normal life. He was pushed towards politics more out of compulsion than choice. With all said about him he is reluctantly in politics. Sajad Lone no doubt nursed political ambitions but coy Bilal Lone notwithstanding having stood with his father through thick and thin wanted to lead normal life, away from politics. Lone never wanted his children in politics. Bilal who has inherited diction and style of his father Says that he plunged into politics just to perpetuate political beliefs of his father. But as against the leaders in power politics wanting their sons and daughters in politics is not confined to this side of Kashmir only. This malaise has crossed over the LOC without passport. And many

a politician on that side of Kashmir have this urge of perpetuating their children in politics. This has been the only guiding principle for them as well. "Mujahid Awal" as the word was drilled into our tender brain for past fifty seven years Saradar Abdul Qayoom Khan has been playing to the galleries of New Delhi to perpetuate his son Mr. Atiaq in politics and see him in the saddle of Prime Minister in Azad Kashmir as Dr. Farooq Abdullah wants to see Umar Abdullah or Mufti Mohammad Syed wants to see Mehbooba Mufti.

It is not only the saddle of Chief Minister that these politicians want to be reserved for their children. Dr. Farooq Abdullah sees a far greater role for his son in the politics of the sub-continent than his mother had dreamt for him. Encouraged by the extra-ordinary warmth shown by Pakistan President General Musharraf towards the grand son of Sheikh Abdullah, the arch critic of Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the idea of Pakistan Farooq is looking at his son as a great peace broker between India and Pakistan. If Farooq Abdullah is to be believed General Musharraf and his Foreign Minister have seen a great spark in the autonomy proposal and have asked Umar Abdullah for coming with an explanatory note on the 'autonomy proposal'. This he is taking to Islamabad before the visit of the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. With both Pakistan and India responding to the politicians sons in Kashmir it seems that this neo-monarchy is the future political system of Kashmir and these Yasin's, Shabir's, Nayeems, Saharis and S.D s will be nothing but inidgets the future dispensation of Kashmir politics-if destiny does not take them to the top slots.

About Academia

It was pleasing. It sounded melodious. It augured well to find out our new generation leaders carried no airs about themselves and they were open to convictions. It was also pleasing that they wore no blinkers, they had not plugged their airs and they were receptive to fresh ideas and yearned for some one who could update them and enlighten them on issues relating to the 'movement' they were in. We have a legion of young selfless leaders- some really embodiments of sacrifices who have suffered incarcerations for more than a decade, some whose families were consumed by the 'movement' and remained by and large unsung. And youth of many of these young leaders faded in captivity and what I could find, majority of them are happy in playing second fiddle in the organizations that they have joined after release from detentions. Majority of these youth are well entrenched in their political and religious beliefs and longer immurements have made them more sanguine and less phlegmatic.

Sitting in my newspaper officer, I have had the opportunity of having interaction with a few of them and I could very comfortably draw a parallel between them and Youngmen of my early days. True, a younker of my times was politically conscious, had fertile effervescent mind and was bubbling with emotions and enthusiasm. He was rebellious- and wanted to replace the traditional leadership that he believed had always taken wrong decisions at the right moments and betrayed people's faith but failed. He had an urge to see himself catapulted to the centre stage of, 'mainstream politics'- My meaning of mainstream politics is antithesis of the commonly known meaning of this word. But, what made him different from youth of today was that he had not to undergo through such drill and

mill as the generation of today has been going on. He undoubtedly had suffered agonizing third degree persecutions and longer imprisonments. Chastisements in Red-16, *Bagh-e-Mehtab* and *Wazir Villa, Talab Tulu* were crude and brutish methods used to break their will and determination and dissuade them from politics. But in those days there was no fear of 'disappearances and custodial killings. The first ever custodial killing was of Ghulam Mohammad Bulla who was detained for pasting posters against Indra-Sheikh Accord of 1975.

Another important thing that distinguish the then youth (i.e. of sixties and seventies) and the youth of nineties and after was that the older generation was not lost in the maze of political goals and ideologies. Only ideology that served as driving force for them for leading agitations, faking protest rallies, picketing on roads, engaging police in ding-dong battles and landing themselves in jails was 'the right to self-determination' -that they believed had accrued to the people of Jammu and Kashmir State through various resolutions adopted by the United Nations at different junctures of our recent history. Majority of youth believed that Jammu and Kashmir State did not qualify to be independent state as it never had been a geographical unit in the past, it has had no common ethnic and linguistic bondage, it had no common history and the only thing that bound this region was the religion and it has been its Muslim majority status that had provided it a cause to be a part of Pakistan as India and Pakistan had tumbled in the comity of nations as Independent dominions out of the two-nation political philosophy. They believed that Kashmir was a part of sub-continental identity and notwithstanding being placed in different political situations its political aspirations were same as that of other people in the sub-continent and nothing like so-called *Kashmiriyat* was then talked about even by those long haired, unshaven poets and writers then regularly meeting in Khanyar. The phrase was yet to be born. The only slogans that they raised were 'we want plebiscite', 'our demand plebiscite' and 'Right to Self Determination is our birth right'. I have never heard slogans like 'W want Azadi' or 'Azadi means Lai Lah Alliah' or so many other slogans which are a part of Islamic movements in the world. It was not only belief of the youth but majority of the Plebiscite Front workers subscribed to the idea that as a natural corollary Kashmir should have been a part of Pakistan. As one could make out those days even Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, founder President of the Plebiscite Front and his General Secretary Ghulam Muhammad Bhaderwahi subscribed to the ideology held by majority of workers of that organization. It will be difficult to

state if Sheikh Abdullah ever believed in two nation theory or total Independence for the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Sheikh undoubtedly is blamed of having entered into a conspiracy with Adal Stevenson for an Independent Kashmir but it would be Tomfodery to believe this theory unless Government of India releases the classified documents on the subject. It is just an allegation that has been contradicted by the Sheikh at the peak of Plebiscite Front Movement.

In true sense the concept of total independence for the state was a later day development. The idea was more born in Pakistan Controlled Kashmir and Rawalpindi than on this side of Kashmir. I believe it travelled to Kashmir through Muhammad Maqbool Bhat in concrete form. But neither Maqbool Bhat nor any of his supporters in Kashmir have come up with any kind of treatise that could give an ideological content to the slogan raised by them. I have only had an opportunity of reading "*shoor-i-firada*" a compilation of letters of Bhat. Many friends have been asserting that he was writing a book in support of his ideology and had handed over the manuscripts to his lawyer. Amanullah Khan's two volume autobiography is nothing but self glorification. Equally Azam Inqalabi's books do not provide us any insight into the concept of independent State.

One can very comfortably say that young generation of my times by and large had clarity of mind, unanimity of thought and almost professed one kind of political ideology as against the youth of today who is deluged by the barrage of ideologies and political phraseologies. There is hardly a day when a new phrase is not pumped into his mind. From the Brookings Institution to Pakistan President General Musharraf, every one is interested in coining a new term about Kashmir problem thus making this 'arithmetical question' the greatest ever jigsaw puzzle. My young leaders are confronted with very complex phrases to quote a few, 'Negotiated Settlement', 'The Andorra Model', 'The Ireland Model', 'The out of box solution', 'The Dixon plan', 'New Partition plan', 'Autonomy', 'self-governance', 'self-rule', Condominium- or joint-management and 'demilitarization'. What are the implications of these solutions mostly hawked by Americans is bothering the minds of new generation political leadership. To illustrate these new formulas and phrases that are being talked about for the resolution of Kashmir problem there comes the role of "cloak and gown" community relishing clean air in magnificent campus of Kashmir University.

True, the Kashmir University continues to be a goody-goody *maktab*

and is yet to graduate to the level of its name. Of late some well meaning scholars have been recruited in the University but how many of them have had the courage for holding seminar's on possible solutions of Kashmir problem. It cannot be denied that there are few 'Norman Holmes' in the campus whose only interests is to see some or other agency sponsoring their foreign trips. One is amazed what prevents the departments like Law, Political Science, History, Mass Communication, Central Asian Studies, Institute of Kashmir Studies to debate and discuss the terms that have been emanating from the State Department, Institutions in Europe, India and Pakistan or even from Pakistan President Parvez Musharraf. The professors in the campus need don academic cloaks and gowns and tear apart their shyness and inertness. One is amazed why Kashmir University cannot set an Institute like Centre for Policy Research in the state to debate and discuss political issues confronting the state.

Mould them the Way You Want

'Old is gold' is a famous adage. This proverb like a rainbow cascades many colours and shades. With every hue telling a different story and each shade having its own meaning. This ostensibly simple phrase has different connotations in Kashmir politics. The phrase has its own meaning for each and every political party in the state. It connotes much more to New Delhi's Kashmir policy than ordinarily understood.

To the National Conference, this phrase conveys hardcore 'Sheikhites', crudely *shaer* i.e. old guards in the party who have worked with Sheikh Abdullah. This group which is closer to Sheikh Nazir, Party General Secretary than to party patron Dr. Farooq Abdullah and party Chief Omar Abdullah are also described as loyalists. Others are 'vo'pur' (outcastes). In the dictionary of Jamat-e-Islamia, another major political party in the State this phrase means those who have thoroughly understood message of the founder of the organization, Maulana Abul Ala Mawdudi and are pursuing his mission without dabbling in politics and have worked with Maulana Sadudin, the founder chief of Kashmir unit. In the Pradesh Congress the phrase implies those leaders whose families joined Congress Party at a time when they were socially boycotted by people, when Sheikh Abdullah had denounced them as "worms of gutter" and asked people not to participate in their funeral prayers. The word for the Awami Action Committee means those of the supporter families that had stood by the side of Mirwaiz family when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah the then Prime Minister of the State had latched gates of *Mirwaiz Manzil* and deported members of Mirwaiz family across the Ceasefire line and when grants were stopped by him to Islamia High School and its other

branches- ironically Abdullah's own *alma mater*. The phrase for this party means those families who withstood Abdullah's arm twisting policies from 1947 to 1953 and did not allow of grants to come to keep schools open.

This adage "old is gold" is one of the highlighted phrases in the 'New Delhi's Kashmir lexicon'. In broader terms it means political leaders with long history. The phrase, when finely tuned, means leaders that could be trusted. The phrase besides carrying other meanings also means politicians and leaders that could be banked upon in the hour of crisis. The contemporary Kashmir history bears testimony that it has been this phrase that has enabled New Delhi to tackle Kashmir situation whenever it believed that it had gone out of gear and had become uncontrollable. In fifties when it believed that Sheikh could not be reined back it used 'old guard' Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad to rein him. Notwithstanding his scholarship and political sagacity, it is believed in New Delhi's list of the trusted that Maulana Mohammad Syed also figured in the list of "old is gold" and in the hour of crisis- it banked on him to steer it out of crisis. Many fingers have been raised against the enigmatic role played by Maulana Muhammad Syed Masoodi during the 1963 Holy Relic Movement and the 1965 youth agitation- it is believed by many contemporary political observers that he steered New Delhi out of embarrassing situation at those crucial junctures. Many living political leaders, who were a part of the 1963 Holy Relic Movement claim that it was Masoodi's working in tandem with New Delhi that derailed this movement and converted it into an agitation that ended up with the release of the Sheikh Abdullah. They also claim that in 1965, it was he who informed the then Chief Minister G.M. Sadiq about the "Mujahideen" (Infiltrators) and had a meeting with him at his official residence *Gagrabal* for combating them and requested for his 'safe custody'. Since Maulana did not leave any memoirs behind, it will be difficult to cross check the allegations against him. Masoodi helping New Delhi in hours of crisis has been refrained by all political leaders from Sheikh Abdullah to Moulvi Abbas Ansari. Sheikh Abdullah has described him in most unsavory language; "journalist and contemporary chronicler," Sanaullah Bhat has seen "traits of famous Shakespearian villain Iago, in him".

In 1990, when Kashmir crisis assumed serious dimension it had to rope in the services of another trusted name belonging to 'old is gold' genera for taking New Delhi out of quagmire. Mufti Muhammad Syed who was then in the Janata Dal was made Home Minister of India with absolute

authority of dealing the Kashmir situation- I need not repeat the happenings that I believe are as fresh as morning with majority of readers of this column. In 1996, it saw a role for another person on the rolls of "old is gold". To deflate the international pressure restoration of a civilian government in the state had become a necessary evil for New Delhi and Dr. Farooq Abdullah was asked to perform the role of majordomo which he did quite happily believing that he was the protagonist. Whether Farooq performed his role wearing a crown or a coxcomb, in the eyes of New Delhi he has never been a protagonist but only a guest actor. He played scripted role for six years but with change in New Delhi's understanding - he is now denied even role of the extra- which he has been frantically asking for.

There are all indications that the adage 'old is gold' has lost its sheen, luster and meaning for New Delhi. The phrase which has now been added to the list of trite and worn-out in Kashmir lexicon has been replaced by a new phrase, "young are malleable".

The word 'malleable' holds a promise for New Delhi in Kashmir. It is believed that this word like a magical wand is going to exorcise the state of all the spells that have been haunting it. The list of 'malleable' by and large, no doubt, is very vast but prominent on the list are Omar Abdullah, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Sajad Ghani Lone. It is this young "leadership" that New Delhi believes has a greater role to play in future political dispensations in the state. True, there are some more names in its list but, by and large, they are considered as 'soap bubbles'- that are expected to wither away on their own. The question now arises is; can New Delhi succeed in bringing all the 'malleable' together and make them work in a tandem for steering out of the present political situation. There are pointers that suggest that New Delhi is working in this direction. If one reads between the lines the objectives behind meetings and conference arranged by organizations like PUGWASH and government facilitating the travel of these leaders by and large the sons and the daughters of 'old guards' it transpires that they want them to reach to a consensus. The meeting between Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Sajad Lone and Mehbooba Mufti in the land of Nasir, Syed Quatb and Umma Kulsum, - where shadows of Saladin Ayoubi still looms large, testify the surmises that New Delhi is looking for a new political dispensation in the state in which it wants to allot a bigger role to sons and daughters of old guards.

The new found phrase that 'young are malleable- mould the way you

want them,' New Delhi very firmly believes can steer it out of the quagmire.

How true: wait and watch is the best answer.

Saga of Heroic Tales

Frailty is not thy name— thy name is valiance and valour. The story of Kashmir woman is derring-do. It is moving narrative of courage. It is a saga of heroic tales. Every day she adds a page of courage and bravery, gallantry and determination to the history of Kashmir. There is *Jagar Mass* – a woman of extraordinary courage, a moving spirit that braves batons and bayonets in every village and locality of Kashmir- in every nook and corner of the state. True, there is no women militia in Kashmir but the sobbing mothers and blushing but emotionally, bruised sisters are no less than tigress while protesting against one or the other atrocities or injustices. Fearless of sacrifices they pour in the streets to protest against a 'killing in captivity', 'a gruesome murder, a 'detention', an 'injustice' and a 'desecration of place of worship'.

True, the Kashmir women has been a victim of lust and lasciviousness of the evil eyes of marauders and desperadoes in 'fatigues' but it would be wrong to believe that she ever gave up. History bears testimony that Kashmir women whether of lower crust or upper class, whether breathing under mud huts or thatched roofs or living in palatial and posh houses have held their honour and dignity sacred to them. Right from the days of Mongiol desperado Zulju History is replete with instances about women drowning themselves in the Jhelum to save their chastity and honour.

There is no denying the fact that there are no front-ranking women political leaders in contemporary Kashmir, but every day a Kashmiri woman adds a page of courage and sacrifice to the history of Kashmir. She writes it when she faces cordon and search or what in common parlance is known as crackdown in her small desolate hamlet, far from the media gaze. She

writes it while braving her way through thick forests with a load of hay or dry twigs on her head. She writes it while leading a procession, a protest rally and a demonstration against one or the other atrocities. The role played by women in the recent Kashmir history has been much more than that played by many men. It has not been just and honest of our historians to have glossed over the role played by women in our struggle. Names of women political volunteers of thirties and forties have not been mentioned even in footnotes of our history. No documentaries have been made on Zooni's and Raja's of our freedom movement. Most of Kashmir histories mention some pro-India women volunteers who for their belonging to the political families stood with the National Conference in 1947 and played a pro-active role in hailing landing of Indian troops in Kashmir on 27 October 1947. The names of Zanib-Begum, Mehmooda Ahmed Ali, Sajda Zameer Ahmed and Begum Akbar Jehan dot the pages of Kashmir history but there is hardly a history that makes a mention of the role played by a woman of caliber- Miss Nasira Sidiq and others. Let me recap:

On 3 June 1947 partition of India was announced. On 19 July 1947 the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference held meeting of its general council. Leaders from all over Jammu and Kashmir participated. In this meeting ninety percent of members supported 'accession to Pakistan.' Immediately after the general council meeting leaders of this organization spanned across the State (then a country) to propagate their outlook. It was a period of faster developments and the Muslim Conference leadership in my opinion failed to keep pace with these developments thus yielded a greater space to the National Conference to operate. At this juncture a young lady Miss Nasira Sidiq appeared on the scene to lead the Muslim Conference. On 19 August 1947 "a huge public meeting" was held by the Muslim Conference in the Muslim Park at Nowhatta. The speaker who could invigorate the gathering and enthuse them to stand by the resolution adopted by the conference a month back was none other than Miss Nasira Sidiq. Who was this Nasira Sidiq? Unlike Qadeer of 1931, she was not a mysterious character. She was one of the trusted lieutenants of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. A leading leader of the Punjab Muslim League.

Nasira Sidiq was the grand daughter of Nawab Jamsheed Ali Khan and only daughter of Nawab Ali Mohammad of Meerut. She had received religious education from Allama Shabir Ahmed Usmani. From her days in Aligarh she actively participated in religious preaching through Begum

Maulana Mohammad Ali Jawhar and joined the Muslim League politics. At the behest of Quaid-i-Azam she joined Kashmir struggle against the autocratic rule. 'She first arrived in Srinagar in 1943. She established two primary schools in Islamabad and under the canopy of these schools she carried out her political activities to subvert the Congress influence in the state. She established close rapport with the Muslim Conference leaders and leaders of the Muslim Students Union. The role of this lady in 1947 in Kashmir outshines the role of many Muslim Conference leaders of Srinagar. She called on Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in Badam-i-Bagh jail and vehemently pleaded before him for 'accession to Pakistan'. "Sheikh Sahib did not outrightly turn down her suggestion but said that he could decide about it only after he was out of prison." She established closer rapport with Muslim officers in the civil and military wings. She carried a door to door campaign in support of State's accession to Pakistan in entire state. Shuttling from Srinagar to Udhampur and Baramulla to Anantnag she had made her presence felt. She became a part of the underground activities started by Abdul Salam Dalal and Mir Abdul Aziz in Srinagar. She traveled all over the state and held public meetings in violation of Kashmir Defence Rules. Notwithstanding the Government imposing all restrictions on her, she succeeded in reinvigorating the Muslim Conference cadres. She suffered a bullet injury in Pattan, but this did not dampen her initiative. Prof. L.F. Rushbrook in his book, "State of Pakistan" has showered all praise on her for her role in 1947.

The question that haunts one's mind is; do we have a lady of mettle as Nasira Sidiq in contemporary Kashmir? There are many. There are multitudes of women who played a front ranking role in contemporary situation. There are women of guts like- Jagar Masi- illiterate but courageous, in every locality. I do not know if they are ever profiled but there will find a mention in contemporary Kashmir situation. There is hardly any important pro-India or Pro-right to self determination party that can boast of having women of substance in their ranks. No women in Kashmir has so far occupied top slot in any of Kashmir organization. Many women who have carved out a role for themselves have launched their own political organizations. Many a women academicians have started taking interest in Kashmir Affairs and have been participating in conferences- mostly connected with human rights. But, what could be called as the role is yet to be played by any woman academician of Kashmir. What makes them shy of playing a substantive role in Kashmir Affairs is surprising? I think only Dr. Hamida Nayeem teacher in the English Deptt. of Kashmir Univer-

sity is one lady academician who did participate in some important international conferences on Kashmir.

The fact of the matter is that the number of political activists in Kashmir is very small. Only name that has got embossed on my mind have been Asiya Andrabi ha been this women leader born on Feb 8, 1962, who has been attracting headlines since 1988 Starting as social reformist in 1988 and launching a powerful campaign in support of prohibition she graduated to a top slot in the "struggle for right to self-determination." This women in total '*hijab*' for her vigorous campaign against the recently unearthed sex scandal has become a household name. How better shen is shaped as Kashmir leader! I abhor calling her a women leader because that smacks of male chauvinism.

Women of Kashmir need not to live in anonymity but make full use of their capabilities. They should play key role in Kashmir politics the role big as that of Sarojini Nadiu or Fatima Jinnah.

"Mainstream Politicians"

Symbiotic and parasitic- let me borrow these two words often used by students of biology; not for describing relations amongst plants but for analyzing arrangements between "mainstream politicians" and New Delhi. Notwithstanding the claims made by many Kashmir politicians that the wedlock between them and New Delhi has been ideological- on the litmus test of contemporary history the relationship has proved nothing but a marriage of convenience. Before I analyze relation between Kashmir leaders from Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah to his grandson or from Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad to New Delhi's presently new bet in regional politics, let me narrate an incident that took place about twenty five years back at New Delhi.

Syed Mir Qasim who was Chief Minister during our college and university days was known for his 'gentleness' and commitment for the Congress politics. In his heart of hearts he always nursed a feeling that Sheikh Abdullah's removal in 1953 was not "justified" and justification given for it was "without legal support". If he is to be believed, It was his urge to "undo" the mistake of the past in what he termed as India's national interest. No sooner did New Delhi believe that Sheikh Abdullah was a "tamed boy," it started a dialogue with him for restoring him to the seat of power and Syed Mir Qasim knowing well that it was a move to remove him from power, happily yielded place for the Sheikh with the hope that he would be "rehabilitated" at New Delhi with great honour but his dream of getting a coveted place at the centre proved a pipe dream for him. He brought Sheikh back from 'wilderness' to 'mainstream' and found himself in his shoes. It was during this phase of life that one day on return from

Morning walk in the Lodhi garden I, along with a fellow journalist, Sheikh Manzoor Ahmed, of U.N.I and Abdul Hamid Bhat another friend called on Syed Mir Qasim at the residence of one Gul Sher Khan (MP) on Lodhi Road. I did not know him personally but he knew my other two friends. No sooner did we talk about his sour relationship with Mrs. Gandhi than he poured his heart out: "In the lexicon of New Delhi politics we are like polo-horses. You are best bet till you can run and no moment they believe that you are tired you are brought to stable, fed for sometime and then finally fired upon and removed from the scene". He also explained how New Delhi was pursuing a Machiavellian policy in Kashmir. It has been honest of him that what he told us finds a mention in his autobiography "My Life and Times" in these words, "That whenever New Delhi feels that a leader in Kashmir is getting too big for his shoes, it employs Machiavellian methods to cut him to size. This it does by projecting a lesser leader as an alternative with the help of two overt and covert campaigns."

If Syed Mir Qasim's statement is read between the lines it proves that the relation between "mainstream" Kashmir leadership with the centre is by and large symbiotic that is to the benefit of both till the leader is capable of delivering as per its whims and fancies, parasitic when leader turns out to be a spent force and then finally forgotten. This has been fate of all Kashmir mainstream leaders without exception. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1947 swam against tide, refused to accept India's Independence Act in its totality; opposed state's accession to Pakistan; hailed landing of Indian troops in Kashmir; garlanded the soldiers of Sikh regiment on their arrival at Srinagar airport, buried his own workers guarding Ram Bagh bridge secretly without a whisper; organized protest rallies against the arrival of Afradies; deported leaders of the Muslim Conference opposing accession with India and endorsed the accession to India. For the tasks performed by him he lived in a make-belief world that would always be garlanded for his 'rebuking Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and his two nation theory. But it proved just hallucination for him. It was just after six years that he was unceremoniously removed from power and put in jail for eleven long years. He was New Delhi's best bet for international opinion when Mountbatten and Nehru decided to take Kashmir to the Security Council. It is a different story that he got worst drubbing in the august body and was exposed before the international community. In the words of M.O. Mathai (My days with Nehru), 'Sheikh was no more than a dandy.' Pakistanis succeeded in making expressions like "stooge and Quisling" stick to him. His frequent impromptu utterances to the press

on Kashmir and other questions caused needless embarrassments. In fact the Sheikh's presence, contrary to expectations was more a liability than asset." Notwithstanding Mathai's assertions about his failures in the United Nations, fact of the matter was that the Sheikh was the best 'show boy' of New Delhi before the international community during those very crucial and critical years in the history of Kashmir dispute. On diplomatic front his standing by the side of New Delhi did provide India a great mileage over that of Pakistan. But what prompted New Delhi to show door to him is not a jigsaw puzzle when seen in the perspective of the bible drafted for dealing with Kashmir leaders. There are many versions about his removal from power. Some blamed Kashmiri pandits which included Nehru confidants like D.P. Dhar, B.M. Koul and Kachru. Some blamed Sheikh for having entered into conspiracy with Adal Stevenson for an independent Kashmir and some blamed the Nehru family including Vijay Lakashmi Pandit, Padama Naidu and Feroze Gandhi for his ouster. Whatever the reason his removal was in tune with policy governed by words 'symbiotic' and 'parasitic'.

It was not the Sheikh alone who suffered the nemesis but Bakshi who was hailed as hero for removing the Sheikh suffered the same retribution eleven years later. When he was thrown out of power and pushed in jail for corruption.

The question rises; does New Delhi 'mistrust' even the "mainstream" leadership or it is part of what Syed Mir Qasim called as Machiavellian policy or Sheikh Abdullah, towards end of his life, denounced as *Chankayaniti*. In mid nineties when entire Kashmir was ablaze and dance of death was in full swing Dr. Farooq Abdullah emerged as India's best bet for mobilizing international opinion. India incurred huge expenditure on his foreign sojourns, which sometimes made other Indian politician envious of him. In fact he had been virtually functioning as India's Roving Ambassador. Those days he was crying full throat that Kashmir was an integral part of India and indulged in lot of Pakistan bashing. A senior office in New Delhi recruit a direct to I.A.S hailing from U.P. one day asked me if I had ever heard him saying that Kashmir was an integral part of India, as soon as I said "no" he again asked me then why does Farooq Abdullah cry hoarse about it? Without waiting for my reply, he said he does not believe in it- but it is his compulsion. It may be an individual opinion but it is a manifestation of New Delhi's psyche about Kashmir leaders.

In mid nineties Farooq Abdullah, with all his failings and shortcomings was in the understanding of the powers in the capital most "relevant" for 'running Kashmir show' and Narsihma Rao government had on umpteen occasions announced package after package with autonomy less than total Independence for wooing him for contesting the elections. But the question arises; why did he lose his relevance for New Delhi in 2002? Was it that he had become a liability or he was made a "scapegoat" for winning an international opinion (for knowing truth we will have to wait for Farooq Abdullah's autobiography). Farooq received all favours, both political and personal, till the relations were symbiotic. Now in the new dispensation the role that was being played by Farooq Abdullah, both at the domestic and international levels, has been assigned to the former Home Minister and PDP leader. This symbiotic relation is going to survive till New Delhi finds a more "relevant" person. It may be even from the "separatist" camp. The net has been cast let us wait to see who gets caught.

COMPLEX CROWD CALLED LEADERS

It is, it has been, and it will remain a tedious and complex job to forge unity amongst leaders. Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah about whom Stanly Wolpert has said, 'Few individuals significantly alter the course of history. Fewer still modify the map of the world. Hardly any one can be credited with creating a nation state. Mohammad Ali Jinnah did all the three.' Or Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, the man in the words of W. Smith who 'summoned the sleeping Muslims to awake' and 'brought most important and most necessary revolution of Islam' failed to bring Kashmir leadership together. It is a jigsaw puzzle why these leaders of 'indomitable will' and 'great vision' failed to bring Kashmir leaders together. It may look a sweeping statement but historically it is true that Kashmiris have never been united. Is dissension inherent in this tiny nation born out of confluence of twelve different diverse tribes that converged in this great pasture from different directions to feed their cattle in pre-historic times? Dissension and Kashmir seem to be born for each other. To say dissension is what in literature we describe as 'tragic flaw' of Kashmir. Historically Kashmiris have all along attracted catastrophes after catastrophes because of the divide in its ranks. Majority of Kashmir leaders from Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah to Mirwaiz Muhammad Umar Farooq have pounded their chests and continue to scream over suffering "slavery" for four hundred years. Is it not a fact that the discord amongst Kashmiris brought the Moughals to Kashmir? Is it not a fact that Kashmiris collaborated with the Pathans, the Sikhs and the Dogras? Overwhelmingly the collaborators were Kashmiri Brahmans. That is not of much consequence, fundamentally they were also Kashmiris. If these alien rulers or marauders would not have got coop-

eration from these collaborators perhaps their rule would have not lived longer. Alien rule, vested interest and collaborators make a powerful combination for subjugating a nation. But people uniting against this combine is a natural corollary that is what history tells us.

Adversity unites people, is not just aphorism but a hard historical reality. When I saw this reality failing on the touchstone of Kashmir politics I started believing that schism and Kashmir politics 'were born together. I wrote about it and tried to delve deeper into contemporary history to find the causes of this peculiar phenomenon of Kashmir politics.

When Hurriyat Conference fractured I, like many other Kashmiris, was shocked. I started looking at factors that might have broken this conglomerate of diverse group which had been put together by many well meaning Kashmiris, both inside and outside Kashmir, with a view to give a façade- a face to the 'struggle for right to self-determination'. The ostensible factors seemed that Syed Ali Geelani, who minces no words about the future of the Jammu and Kashmir and believes in 'accession of the state to Pakistan', despite Pakistan establishment now totally averse to the idea had to part ways with the then Maulvi Abbas led Hurriyat Conference for not playing pro-active role in boycott the 2002 Assembly elections; the Peoples Conference's fielding proxy candidates and Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat's not boycotting the elections. Geelani was almost left alone with his parent organization Jamat-e-Islami also distancing itself from his ideas on the question of accession and not 'accommodating what were termed as moderate views propounded by former Jamat-e-Islamia Chief Ghulam Mohammad Bhat and perpetuated and fostered by Nazir Ahmed Kashani. True, a single sparrow can not make spring but Geelani was soon joined by some prominent many second wrung leaders and key actors in the 'struggle for right to self-determination'. The two factions of the Hurriyat with diverse approaches turned out to be two banks of a stream that would perhaps never meet till the river flows. The Division of Hurriyat was not a new phenomenon. It has been tragedy of Kashmir that Kashmir leadership by and large has always lacked in ideological fidelity and those who sacrificed self-interest for the national cause or collective interests could be counted on finger tips. No moment the Hurriyat Conference fractured pages of history started flipping in my mind like leaves of a book. In 1932, we were divided into the Muslim Conference and Azad Muslim Conference on the question whether Ahmediya's should be given a space in the movement or not. In 1938, Prem Nath Bazaz under the tutelage of

Jawaharlal Nehru succeeded in vivisectioning the Muslim Conference that caused the birth of the National Conference. Seen in right perspective the Kashmir tragedy was born on this day. The Holy Relic Movement which had tidal impact on Kashmir in 1964 and which swept away well entrenched pro-India forces of their feet suffered terrible erosion immediately after the release of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. The only beneficiary of this mass movement was G.M. Sadiq and Sheikh Muhammad Syed Masoodi and Nehru's emissary for ending of the Holy Relic Movement was installation of G.M. Sadiq as Chief Minister release of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, and withdrawal of conspiracy case against him. Many friends had predicted that the Hurriyat Conference will also crumble like the Action Committee of sixties. But perhaps out of naivety I saw no parity between 1964 situation and 2002 scenario. It cannot not happen after thousands having been consumed by the struggle and almost every home having offered sacrifices. I earnestly wish this conglomerate to be on a very firm political pedestal which could not ordinarily be shaken.

I had a strong realization that the Hurriyat Conglomerate in a war like situation in the state in mid-nineties was undoubtedly creating problems for New Delhi. It had emerged as political voice of the State not in India only but also at the international level. Initially New Delhi looked at the birth of the Hurriyat as a positive sign for containing insurgency in the state. But the tidal waves of militancy were so powerful and swift that they swept away most of the Hurriyat leaders from their traditional moorings. They made them sing songs in chorus with the militants and almost all of them owned one or the other militant organization. The Unity in the Hurriyat had no ideological base. It had been welded by gun only and no moment gun lost its firepower the conglomerate got divided.

History convinces that the crowd called Kashmir leadership can never be united. In thirties Quaid-e-Azam and Dr. Iqbal failed to unite them. With no Iqbal and the Quaid around them it seems that Kashmir movement, born with a bang in nineties is destined to die- sorry for hurting sentiments!

ROAD TO LIBERTY

"*Hay- ye vyath kar sana khule' saree masla gachhan hulf*". (When will this road open all our problems would get solved) this simple sentence with far-reaching implications with all its freshness lives with my childhood reminiscences. It is as fresh as lullabies of grandmother. In my childhood this sentence was heard everywhere; it was heard in mosque *hamams*, in marketplaces, in the baker shops, and the in barber shop and all social gatherings. I did not understand implications of this most common sentence. One day I asked my grandmother "*Didi ya koasei vyath cha lukh wanan*" (Grandmother what 'road' are people talking about it?) She was simple, illiterate but wise. Instead of answering my question directly, she pointed towards the snow-clad peaks which were then distinctly visible from our "*Kani*" (top floor of our house) and said, "beyond those mountains lies Muzzafarbad, another part of Kashmir and then Pakistan. It was through this road "Your grandfather traveled to Lahore, Peshawar and Karachi. It was through this route caravans from Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and Yarkand arrived in Kashmir and equally caravans from here would travel to those countries". She added, "This road got closed after the *Kabael Raid* and landing of Indian troops in Kashmir." She would then use rough language against Sheikh Abdullah. Then I did not understand political, social and human implications of the closer of this road. Just below those snowcapped mountains one could distinctly see the pine forests dominating the skyline. The cedars on the ridges of those mountains looked to me like humans from the windows of the top floor. In my childhood I would always think that they were human crossing over from the other side into our beautiful valley. This imagination persisted

with me till the time the word '*vyath*' assumed political significance and echoed in every street, lane, village and hamlet.

Ironically Sheikh Abdullah, who dreaded opening of this road from 1947 to 1953, became its greatest votar after 1958. The Plebiscite Front that lead "Right to Self Determination Movement" in the State from 1955 to 1975 along with its demand for holding of Plebiscite in the State under aegis of the United Nation also raised the slogan of "open the Rawalpindi road". What had prompted the Front leadership to demand of opening of the Jhelum valley Road popularly known as "Rawalpindi Road" set many political observers thinking, some construed it as departure from the traditional stand of the Plebiscite Front and some looked at it as 'dilution in the Front stand' but there was hardly any one who did not appreciate importance of this road for the growth and development of the State. The Front leadership raised this slogan even after betraying the cause of "right to self-determination". There was a consensus amongst Kashmir intellectuals on the importance of this road for the socio-economic growth of the State. In the State Peoples Convention of 1968, the 'economic importance of this road' was one of the dominant subjects. The paper by some Ghulam Mohammad Lone had convinced majority of the participants about essentiality of opening at this road for development of the State

To understand political, psychological, human and economic implication of this road there is need for knowing the cause for 'blocking this road'. The closure of this 'natural road' is yet another ugly facet of "Kashmir Tragedy" born in 1947 and for which the United Nations can be held squarely responsible for its failure to implement its resolutions in the State. Consequent upon the United Nations passing resolutions guaranteeing right to self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and 'establishing the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) to investigate and mediate the dispute. In April 1948, by its resolution 47 (1948), the Council decided to enlarge the membership of UNCIP and to recommend various measures including the use of observers to stop fighting. In July 1949, India and Pakistan signed the Karachi Agreement establishing a ceasefire line to be supervised by the observers." I

The "Cease Fire Line" which in fact was drawn up to prevent India-Pakistan armies from colliding and paving way for implementation of the United Nations Resolutions of 1948 and 1949, but in the process it assumed the shape of an impregnable border for the common people. It separated father from son, mother from daughter, brother from brother,

husband from wife and friend from friend. This line has prevented a son from participating in the funeral of his father in the next village but across the Cease Fire Line, rechristened as Line of Actual Control by an agreement between India and Pakistan in 1972. It has prevented a brother from participating in the marriage of his sister just a few hundred meters away from his village. The Cease Fire Line, as I would prefer to call it has rightly been described as 'bloody line' for its having consumed the lives of thousands of innocents. Thousands maimed and crippled living along this line stand as witness to the ugliest side of this artificial line. This line is a living tale of the greatest human tragedy a mega tragic film, not on celluloid but in flesh and blood.

This line has violated the 'fundamental rights' of people of Jammu and Kashmir. It has put curbs on their movement within their own territory. Thousands of people have been tried under ingress and egress rules in vogue in this State for having gone to collect his sheep or goat on the other side. It has brought to end centuries old trade links between people of Kashmir and the Central Asia. It has snapped ever-existing cultural links between various regions of the State. The opening of this road needs to be looked at from 'human rights' and political point of view. It is perhaps for this reason that Kashmir politicians, Hurriyat Conference leaders, Mufti Mohammad Syed Farooq Abdullah etc having diverse opinion converge on this demand: "Open Rawalpindi Road" (written in 1998).

FORWARD MOVEMENT

All seems set for opening of the historical Srinagar-Rawalpindi Road intriguingly renamed as Srinagar- Muzffarabad Road. A lot of media hype has been built about April 7, 2005 when first bus would ply on this road after a gap of 56 years. Crews of television teams, hordes of journalists and bands of politicians have been visiting Uri to see progress on the mending of this abandoned road. Official electronic media has been floating lots of soft stories about the opening of this road and holding discussions. The Jammu and Kashmir Government under direct supervision of Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Syed is making preparations on a large scale to celebrate April 7, 2005 as a day of triumph of the policies of the PDP-Congress coalition and as a 'defeat of separatist leadership.'

There can be no denying that opening of this road is an important milestone in India-Pakistan relations but different people have been looking at this development from different perspectives and varied angles. It is being projected as a step towards converting the LOC into an international border with porosity. It is seen as guarantee by Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Syed and his coalition partner Congress for enabling them to complete full term in office and even returning to power for another term. The ruling alliance believes that this development will further fortify the dilemma of the already fragmented pro-right to self-determination parties and would not enable them to strengthen their foothold. The opening of the road has pushed majority of the pro-right to self determination parties including the Hurriyat Conference in a quandary. Many of them have maintained a discreet silence over it. Only a few have hailed the decision and some are highly skeptical about it. Jamat-e-Islami Chief Nazir

Ahmed Kashani has described opening of the road as a positive step. Maulvi Abbas and others in his tribe see it as a 'concrete step towards peace'. Mirwaiz Mohammad Umer Farooq who returned to Srinagar after three months sojourn to Iran and USA demanded that all other routes to "Azad Kashmir" should be opened. His statement was in fact a repeat the statement made by Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Syed. Hurriyat chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani believes that it is only a step towards diluting Pakistan's stand on Kashmir. Majority of common people look at it as a 'halfway step' of no consequences. Only a few hail it as a step 'better than stagnation' on Kashmir. But what has made people agog was the news in local papers that Pakistan President General Musharaff was arriving in the first bus from Muzffarabad to Srinagar. Is it true that the General shall be arriving in Srinagar in the first bus and cross the line that has consumed thousands of youth during the past fifty seven years? Echoes of this question reverberate in every social gathering in Srinagar city. It continues to be debated even today after official media in Srinagar announced that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was going to flag off the first bus from Srinagar to Muzffarabad and Congress President Sonia Gandhi would also be present on the occasion. It is only an official machinery that seems worked up about the visit of Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh in Srinagar. Man in the street is unconcerned about his arrival but it bothers common people if Pakistan leadership was going to arrive in the first bus or not.

The people's eagerness to receive Pakistan President General Musharraf in Srinagar is a sentiment that needs to be understood and analyzed in the historical perspective of the Kashmir Problem. Kashmiris irrespective of their political beliefs have all along adored the Pakistan leadership. Many were acclaimed in Kashmir much more than they were in their own country. Starting from the birth of Pakistan, the father of the idea of having a separate nation for the Muslims of South-Asia, Dr. Mohammad Iqbal is the most respected by Kashmiris of all shades of opinion. Hundreds of colonies, schools, institutions and colleges are named after him in Kashmir. The largest public park and the biggest academic library in Kashmir are named after this great poet. Today, thousands of parents name their children after his name for the love of the great Kashmiri who piloted the idea of a separate nation for the Muslims of the South Asia. In thirties Dr. Iqbal's house in Lahore was a mecca for all Kashmir leaders, intellectuals and students. It was the nerve centre of Kashmir politics and

it was under his leadership that Kashmir Committee, Lahore campaigned through out British India against the oppression of the Kashmiris by the Dogra rule.

Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah lives even today in the majority of Kashmiri homes. His picture continues to adorn the dabbled walls of an ordinary home in Kashmir. He was the only Muslim leaders of the British India who on his arrival in Kashmir, was always greeted by surging crowds. He was accorded unprecedented reception on his arrival in Srinagar in 1942 by both the National Conference and the Muslim Conference. Notwithstanding Sheikh Abdullah's egocentric politics and propensity towards Jawahar lal Nehru and his Congress Party Quaid-e-Azam was the most respected leader in Jammu and Kashmir. Liqat Ali Khan was equally highly respected by the Kashmiris. His felling to the bullets of an assassin on October 16 1951 had sent shock waves in every nook and corner of Kashmir. Many a stories relating his assassination to Kashmir problem were woven. It was people like Skinader Mirza and Ghulam Mohammad who were abhorred by the common Kashmiri. Ghulam Mohammad was recognized as one who had betrayed Kashmir cause for his petty considerations.

General Mohammad Ayub Khan who ruled Pakistan from October 1958 till March 1969 had become synonymous with Kashmir struggle for right to self determination. His monthly speeches were religiously heard by the Kashmiris with the hope that he would break good news for ending Kashmir stalemate. Notwithstanding his having born in Rehana in the North West Province many Kashmiris believed that he was a Kashmiri born Pathan. Children were told many imaginary stories about his bravery which had made him a cult figure for many youth of late fifties and early sixties. He was admired for 'operation Gibraltar' by an ordinary Kashmiri, not knowing that he was informed about it much after it had started. The fall of Ayub Khan was seen as doomsday for the Kashmir cause by many Kashmiris including many Plebiscite Front leaders.

The exuberance of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto about Kashmir had endeared him to majority of the Kashmiris. His aphorism - 'waging a thousand years war against India over Kashmir' had made him a darling of students and youth of Kashmir. He had become an idol for thousands of students and youth. It was his pictures that would adorn majority of Kashmiri houses after Quaid-e-Azam and Dr. Mohammad Iqbal. His rhetoric about Kashmir had made him a hero of a farmer in the paddy field, a cart puller and an

ordinary labour living in distant and remote village of Kashmir. No Kashmiri was ready to hear about the assassination of this great leader of higher intellect and campaigner of Kashmir in the international forums. He with his programme of Pakistan becoming a nuclear power was seen as a source of strength for the entire Ummah. His assassination had stirred a cauldron of anger in the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir. It caused a great destruction to Jamat-e-Islami supporters for the stories circulated by some people that this organization had celebrated his assassination. While Bhutto's name had become a taboo in Pakistan after his assassination, the people in Kashmir remembered this great supporter of Kashmir. The pictures of Bhutto continued to adorn the drawing rooms on old house of Mian Sarwar near Budshah Nridge in the heart of City in many Kashmir houses. The sign board of the Bhutto Memorial Committee continued to perpetuate his memory.

True, the wounds of Bhutto's assassination continued to ooze for many years, but it is irony that the person who got his warrant of execution executed turned a few years later, the darling of many a Kashmiri youth. He was seen yet another leader from Pakistan who held Kashmir cause very dear to him. His death in a plane crash caused a widespread furor and commotion in Kashmir. Eight people fell to the bullets of the police during their attempt to quell violence that broke out on his death.

An ordinary Kashmiri is a wonderful political analyst, he has his own parameters of assessing Pakistan leadership. In his analysis he neither believed Ms. Benazir Bhutto nor Mr. Nawaz Sharif. The two in his estimation were 'knee-jerking', 'nervous' and 'overawed by India'. He had no faith that the two would further the cause of Kashmir. Mian Nawaz Sharif, despite his Kashmiri origin had failed to convince an ordinary Kashmiri about his capability. Notwithstanding his popularity the ordinary Kashmiri, after Kargil war, believed that he was one who 'betrayed their cause' and 'cheated' them.

After General Mohammad Ayub Khan, it was General Musharraf who in the estimation of an ordinary common Kashmiri emerged as a great champion for the Kashmir cause. His dispensation at the Agra Summit made people realize that this man has capability of taking the Kashmir problem to its logical conclusion. His handling of the situation in the wake of September 11 happenings and coining the slogan 'Pakistan first' fortified his image of a 'true leader' in the heart of an ordinary Kashmiri. It is for his having pleaded for the resolution of the Kashmir problem that makes

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an ordinary Kashmiri wait eagerly for according rousing reception on his arrival on the first bus that crosses the artificial line segregating a Kashmiri from a Kashmiri. The general recognises this artificial line as Mason Dixon Line and nothing more.

Procrastination No Solution

The relations between India and Pakistan have shown considerable improvement since January 2004. The most positive aspect of the present peace initiatives is that they were initiated by the NDA government headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee.- a dove in the sanctuary of hawks and carried forward by the newly elected Congress led government. The Indian Foreign Minister Natwar Singh was right on his arrival in Islamabad on February 15, when he stated "The process had been imparted renewed vigour after the new Government had come to power in India in May, 2004. Since then we have come a fair distance. Diplomatic and communication links have been restored to earlier levels..." Smooth movement of peace talks between India and Pakistan is heartening and leaders of the two countries rightly deserve kudos for having sustained the dialogue for past more than a year despite inherent domestic pressures and contradictions in their stances on the core issue of Kashmir.

Another positive advantage of the ongoing peace process is that India is not presently led by the Congress leadership that was captive of its past mistakes and misjudgments lacking pragmatism. It is more under the command and control of technocrats. The hackneyed politicians within Congress also have been marginalized. The present leadership fully understands that India can earn a place of distinction in the comity of nations only when it weeds out poverty and disease from the nation of 1000 million out of which 800 million live a life of deprivation and malnourishment. It also knows fully that it cannot bring about economic emancipation through warmongering and it fully understands that most important pre-requisite for development is peace. Peace cannot be achieved while

keeping the embers of war living and cause of tension in the region unresolved.

It cannot be disputed that for ensuring peace in the region India Pakistan leadership has drafted number of Confidence Building Measures (CBM). The Foreign Ministers of the two countries during their recent meeting at Islamabad announced that from April 7, 2005, the Buses will start plying between Srinagar and Muzzfarbad. It is a small but a bold decision to remove stagnation that has marred the resolution of Kashmir problem since 1947.

The reopening the Srinagar-Rawalpindi Road has been an old demand of Kashmir leadership. It is as old as the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir. It emerged as one of the main demands during the 1968 State Peoples Convention organized jointly by two prominent leaders of Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq. In this convention a paper was presented exclusively on the importance of this road for the economic development of the State. In this paper this road was described as the jugular vein for growth and development of the State. This road improved upon by the British Engineers in nineteenth century is an all weather road that connect Kashmir valley with the rest of the world upto 1947. It had been main trade link of the state.

It will be too early to say whether plying of buses between Srinagar and Muzzfarabad would be just symbolic or it will turn out to be the jugular vein for the growth and development of Kashmir. To a common man visiting Muzzafarbad is not important, what is important for him is reestablishing old trade links with Rawalpindi and having access to its traditional and the nearest port of Karachi for exporting its goods and finding market for its handicrafts and fresh fruit.

The opening of this road no doubt will facilitate the travel between the two parts and allow the separated families to meet each other but looking at this as solution of the problem would be too myopic.

The decision to connect the two parts of Jammu and Kashmir after fifty seven years no doubt is a bold step but there should be no reason for complacency. Some leaders in the capital have called it as a bold CBM and not a step towards resolution of the Kashmir problem. It believes that this step has paved way for improving trade relations between the two countries. The official Indian electronic media in the state of Jammu and Kashmir in its commentaries described the decision of opening the road as Government of India's move to further expose step-motherly treatment of

Pakistan Government towards Azad Kashmir. In their repeated broadcasts and commentaries they have been stating that the undeveloped Azad Kashmir will be an eye opener for "pro-Pakistan" Kashmir leadership and people of Kashmir valley. The stance taken by the official media has spawned doubts even in the minds of "liberal" Kashmir leaders..

It is naïve to believe that addressing CBM's alone can bring peace in the region. There is need to go beyond the CBM's and address the core issue. Addressing only CBM's is synonymous to procrastination. And procrastination in the past has always led to confrontation.

The past failures have a lesson for the present India-Pakistan leadership. The Liat-Nehru talks, the Marathon-Sessions of dialogue between Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Swaran Singh led us no where. With all its troughs and crest this marathon-dialogue culminated into the 1965 war. It suffered because the then leadership in New Delhi had pre-determined motive of only buying time to offset the International pressure particularly from the West. In fifties and sixties the 'babus' in the South Block mistook procrastination as diplomacy.

If procrastination would not have been hallmark of India's Foreign Policy in late fifties and early sixties Kashmir issue would have been resolved during Nehru's life time. Had it been resolved, three wars between the two countries after Nehru's death would not have taken place. Economic landscape of the two countries, particularly of India, would have been different. It perhaps would have emerged a giant economy in Asia and a key player in the region.

In New Delhi there is a class of people in politics and bureaucracy even today that looks at procrastination as diplomacy. It believes engaging the neighboring country or Kashmir leadership in protracted dialogue. It is a means to exhaust them and offset the pressure from the international community. True, people in India no more believe in whatever is drilled in their ears by the official media and their sentiments cannot be whipped over Kashmir problem. They understand that Kashmir has been the cause for both the wars and war-talks between the two countries.

India and Pakistan leadership have come far away during the past one year. There is a considerable change in the mood of people in the two countries. The mood is for peace and not war. Many common Indians have started looking a fresh at Kashmir problem. They no more look at this problem as a problem of law and order or terrorism but as a political issue of far reaching consequences. They look at this the gift of the British

crown that has been gnawing at Indian economy for the past fifty seven years. There is a need for capitalizing common man's mood in the two countries and finding a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem.

The opening of Muzzfarabad- Srinagar Road should be taken as a stepping stone for peaceful resolution of the Kashmir Problem. There is need to strengthening this stepping stone by widening its scope and allowing the people in two parts to trade with each other and move beyond Kohala Bridge without restrictions.

BEYOND OUT OF BOX

"Oscillation" would be an appropriate word to describe India-Pakistan relations. Like pendulum of an old clock relations between the two countries during the past fifty nine years have been moving from one extreme to another. Notwithstanding talking peace on many occasions the acrimony that accompanied the birth of two countries as independent dominions has always loomed large. History bears testimony that the British India was divided on the basis of two nation theory propounded by Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah once the greatest ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, who till thirties of the past century had dreamt of a 'sovereign and prosperous united India. It was ironic that India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru was not ready to accept this historical reality even after the death of the founder of Pakistan. In his speech on 17 March 1950 he tried to reinterpret history by stating, "We agreed to the constitution of Pakistan by partition of India because of a variety of things that had happened previously. We accepted it as a fact and we had hoped that it would at least solve some of the problems that had troubled us. We did not accept it at any time on the basis of a two nation theory but on the basis of some kind of territorial self-determination". Whether Pakistan was the product of two nation theory or it was the result of territorial self-determination fifty nine years is a sufficient period to have healed the wounds that accompanied the birth of these two countries. But it has been ascending to a British historian, Alistair Lamb "a tragedy that has not allowed these wounds to heal". Kashmir Problem, issue or dispute what your nomenclature is attributed to this 'tragedy' was born more on the floor of the United Nations Security Council than in Indian and Pakistan

Parliaments- India 'referred the Kashmir problem' to the United Nations. To the dismay of the Indian delegation it adopted the resolution of principle of 'territorial self-determination' - for resolving the issue. The stand taken by the United Nations ruffled many feathers in India and not only the opposition but even the Congress leaders demanded withdrawing the problem from the United Nations. But Nehru was categorical that it could not be done. True, much water has flown down the Jhelum during the past fifty nine years. The global scenario has undergone sea changes. The power equations have drastically changed; there have been drifts in the geo-political strategies and priorities of the key global players have changed. India and Pakistan have joined nuclear club- India is looking for a role in the global economy and Pakistan has become front rank ally of the United States in war against terrorism. Many a new countries tumbled in the comity of nations and many a colonies crumbled under the weight of people's struggles. In this changed global scenario the only issue that has been betraying a solution is the Kashmir problem.

It would be behaving ostrich to believe that the Kashmir dispute is no more a global issue. The intensity of this problem may not be felt in the international relation on the same scale as that of Palestine Or Iraq but the reality is that it also exists as determinant factor in the international relations. It has not only been the former U.S. President who, in his historical address, compared the issue to that of Palestine and Cambodia but many an international relations experts have been seeing this problem as a threat to the global peace. The "United States which considers itself both the source and the guarantor of democratic institution around the globe" has been taking keen interest in this problem and wants to intervene in it for its own reasons. Looking for America's role in the 'international stability' the former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in his new book, 'Does America Need A Foreign Policy?- Towards a Diplomacy for the 21st Century' writes, "America's preponderant position rendered it the indispensable component of international stability. It mediated dispute in key trouble spots to the point that in the Middle East, it had become an integral part of the peace process. So committed was the United States to this role that it almost ritually put itself forward as a mediator, occasionally even when it was not invited- as in Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan in July 1999." The observations made by this great international diplomat and political scientists sufficiently suggests that dispute continues to be on the agenda of the United States obviously with an eye on the emergence of China as a global power with the potential of influencing immensely not

only the South-Asian politics but the entire Asia. The India-Pakistan leadership needs to understand the emerging global scenario in the right perspective. It is high time for the two countries to bury the past acrimonies and start a new chapter with clear mind.

Hopes for unburdening the baggage that India and Pakistan had been carrying with them since their birth had brightened after Prime Minister of India; Atal Bihari Vajpayee took some bold initiatives in the right direction but it was perhaps the mind-set both in New Delhi and Islamabad that extended fragility to these initiatives. It has been but for the fragility of these initiatives that the stray incidences of violence have been puncturing them. It is a fact that the Congress led UPA government carried forward the peace process started by the NDA government but it slipped into the hands of hawks after the death of J.N. Dixit, career diplomat advisor to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who had started looking at these relation through a pragmatic perspective. The initiatives to resolve all disputes, including Kashmir suffered yet another setback after ignominious exit of Foreign Minister K. Natwar Singh. Nothing substantial happened especially on the front of India-Pakistan relations for one long year in the South Block. It has not been only the India-Pakistan relations that suffered but more confusion was added to the Kashmir problem by toying with every one sitting around a coffee table in the India International Centre nursing an illusion of being a Kashmir expert meddling in it with shove from different power centers in the capital.

The question arises ;what should one expect from Pranab Mukherjee as the new External Affairs should one expect some forward movement in the relations of two countries that could help in the resolution of the Kashmir problem. Mr. Mukherjee is not new to the office. It is his second stint and many in the capital believe that he is gifted with political acumen. But it would be wrong to expect an out-of-box policy from one who is known for his conservative understanding of the global scenario. Since Mid nineties when he headed the External Affairs Ministry both the Indian and international politics has undergone drastic changes. India's priorities in international relations have changed. It is now Beijing, Islamabad and Washington that are the focal points. Of the three for peace in the region Islamabad has more significant place. Notwithstanding there being more troughs than crests in India-Pakistan relations New Delhi cannot achieve peace in isolation that is vital for country's growing economy. 'It is no secret that some sensitive and important negotiations on Kashmir

are underway and some headway has also been made.' There is a need for creating more positive environment for making this process reach to a logical conclusion. Peace process still holds a promise for amicable and peaceful resolution of the Kashmir problem. The waxed problem which has been evading a solution for the past six decades can find a solution but there is a need for bringing in new synergies between diplomacy and historical realities of the dispute.

The Agra Man

The landmark Agra Summit, despite its failure to conclude at the joint declaration signing ceremony was seen as a step forward in ending war of attrition between India and Pakistan. Protagonists of the summit Prime Minister of India, Atal Behari Vajpayee and President of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf looked at the out come of the summit as highly gainful for drawing a blueprint and a timeframe for resolving all outstanding issues including Kashmir, The main stumbling block in the relations between the two countries. Even the most skeptical and cynical in Indian politics looked at the outcome of the summit with hope and expectations. Political analysts with tinted glasses also saw in the outcome of the summit beginning of a new era in the relations of the two countries. Many a former diplomats who often appeared on Television channels despite having hackneyed ideas about India-Pakistan relations sounded highly optimistic even after the Agra summit ending with a whimper.

Many stories appeared in newspapers about the happenings behind the scene that prevented leaders of the two countries to sign a joint declaration. Many blamed Home Minister, L.K. Advani and some old-fashioned bureaucrats for upsetting the apple cart. Many admirer of Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah credit him with having packed General Pervez Musharraf empty handed. How true were these stories will continue to haunt inquisitive researchers and journalists for many more months. In the words of a Pakistani analyst, "The play had been enacted featuring Vajpayee as a "good guy," Jaswant Singh somewhere in the middle, and Advani, with his Kashmir as an integral part of India featuring as the proverbial bad guy. All of this was standard operating procedure, accept-

able during the course of negotiations.

The hawk and dove story conjured by media in the country about differences of opinion between Home Minister Advani and Prime Minister, Atal Behri Vajpayee over the signing of the joint declaration may have some substance. But the question arises with what expectations New Delhi had invited Pakistan President General Musharraf. Many aids to the Prime Minister had projected General Musharraf as naïve, green and inexperienced person with no diplomatic skills. Taken aback by his candor and success with press at New Delhi, the hawks in the BJP got worried about Prime Minister being outsmarted by the Pakistan general. It was only after the General's having a successful meet with the giants of Indian media that the hardliners in the NDA Government monitored the proceedings of the summit very eagerly. The hardliners insisted on incorporating the word "cross border terrorism" in the joint declaration. In sum and substance the hardliners wanted Pakistan President to declare all Kashmiri militant organizations including Lashker-e-Toiba and Hizbul Mujahideen as "terrorist organization". In Pakistan's reckoning these organization are fighting a war of freedom in the state. Even from a common man's understanding given to the situation and sentiments prevailing in Pakistan it seemed a difficult proposition for the guest leader to consider. The card of cross border terrorism was used with deftness by the hardliners in the Government to derail the summit.

The Agra Summit despite being couched in the best diplomatic phraseology as a success has proved a miserable failure as far as situation in Jammu And Kashmir State was concerned. The immediate fall out of the failure of the Agra summit was the rise of violence in the state. Many youth were reportedly caught and killed. Many a innocent fell victim to some unidentified and invisible guns in Kishtiwari and at Jammu Railway station. Using worsened law and order situation as an alibi entire state was declared as disturbed area. The armed forces special powers act 1990 was extended to the remaining four districts of the State. Declaring entire state might have satisfied hardliners in BJP but the question remains that if it could be an answer to the rising violence in the state. In Kashmir valley and two other districts of Jammu province the armed forces have been enjoying blanket powers for the past eleven years. Have these powers helped in restoring normalcy in the state is a million dollar question which defeats an answer to the best of the analysts with Government of India. Such measures have always proved counter productive. Immediate im-

mediate declaring four more districts of Jammu as disturbed will in the first instance take a toll of the development of these four districts. Investors that had identified, Jammu as a potential area for trade will withdraw.

Bringing Jammu and other districts of the province within the ambit of disturbed areas if seen in right perspective is nothing but failure of the state government to bring about semblance of peace in the state. In the words of veteran Communist leader Somnath Chatterjee, "The action speaks about the ad hocism of the government's Kashmir policy but also reducing the Kashmir imbroglio to no more than a law and order issue, it was again losing sight of the larger contours of the problem."

There is need to change ad hocism policy and approach the whole issue with a fresh mind and renew dialogue with Pakistan for finding a lasting solution to the problem. Instead of getting overawed by the hawks in the BJP led government Prime Minister Vajpayee need to display statesmanship and pursue his goal of ushering in permanent peace with commitment.

PERVEZ MUSHARRAF'S Graph In Kashmir

The graph of popularity of President General Pervez Musharraf has suddenly touched crests in Kashmir. His speech in the Security Council of the United Nation flushed the deathly pale face of ordinary Kashmiri, political workers exposing cause of right to self-determinants, – who have been oscillating between life and death every moment. It was a rebirth of Sir Mohammad Zafarullah Khan for oldies who still remember his speech in the United Nation how he had turned tables against Indian delegation including Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in the august house and made it to adopt the 1948 Resolution on Kashmir against the expectations of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Lord Mountbatten. General Musharraf referring to the United Nations Resolutions on Kashmir and equating Kashmir with Palestine removed many an apprehension from the minds of ordinary Kashmiri that had started thinking that the Pakistan President was betraying the cause of right to self determination.

The speech silenced many political leaders belonging to pro-India political parties like the National Conference, Peoples Democratic Party and the Pradesh Congress who publicly trumpeted that the Pakistan Government was tired of the Kashmir situation. It suddenly suggested that Pakistan had not washed its hands of the United Nations resolution which provided both cause and strength to Kashmiris struggle for right to self-determination, but it was only exploring other options that could be helpful in the resolution of this problem and usher lasting peace in the region.

Surprisingly some of the APHC leaders after their visit to Islamabad and meeting Pakistan President General Musharraf strengthened the propaganda of the pro- India political parties by stating that, the Pakistan

wants to wriggle out of Kashmir imbroglio. It also has been telling its party cadres that there was need for an honourable exit from the present situation. How true these leaders of the conglomerate would be difficult to ascertain but their propaganda attained credibility after the groups that avowedly support accession to Pakistan were marginalized by Pakistan Government- whether this marginalization was out of expediency or naivety is jigsaw puzzle but majority of independent Kashmir observers believe that it was going to prove counter-productive for the ongoing Kashmir movement. The barometer of Pakistan establishment owning or disowning a political party in Kashmir is the Pakistan Television and Radio. Not only the Government controlled electronic media but some private channels of Pakistan totally blacked out the news about other political parties other than the APHC headed by Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq. In fact these official channels have almost put blinkers and have been refusing to see the developments other than in the camp of young Mirwaiz and even hard news emanating from Kashmir hardly finds a mention from them.

While common people were enamored by the performance of President General Musharraf, even though the dialogue between him and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had not shown tangible results, conflicting signals from Islamabad are disappointing. The statement made by Pakistan Commerce Minister Hamyan Akhtar Khan on 18 September CNN programme *Eye On India*- CNN connects disappointed majority of Kashmir. In this programme the Minister extended legitimacy to India fencing the LOC. In reply to the point raised by Indian Representative in the programme that cross border infiltration continued. The commerce minister replied that it had stopped after India fenced the LOC. The Minister perhaps had no proper briefing from the External Affairs Ministry that the LOC was a temporary and transitory border and neither of the two countries had any right to fence it as an International border. The statement made by the Commerce Minister if read between the lines reads like the statement made by the former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Farooq Abdullah after his meeting with Azad Kashmir leader Sardar Abdul Qayoom Khan in New Delhi.

The reported invitation by Pakistan President General Musharraf to National Conference President, Umar Abdullah, Peoples Democratic Chief Mehbooba Mufti and Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Syed for discussing the options for resolving the Kashmir dispute has created an unsavory political atmosphere in the State. The common man is not seeing it

as a positive development but as deviation from the traditional stand of Pakistan about Kashmir. Not only ordinary Kashmiri but the Kashmir leadership espousing the cause of right to self-determination believe that it is extending legitimacy to these leaders who represent India's face in Kashmir. The Kashmir leaders are generally touchy about these developments. In 1993 Pakistan High Commissioner in New Delhi Mr. Riaz Khokhar had to face stiff opposition from Hurriyat leader Late Abdul Ghani Lone for granting visa to Kashmiris for Pakistan on the recommendations of the then National Conference (MP) Prof. S.D. Soz. The Kashmir leaders had also objected to the High Commissioner for accommodating other Kashmir MP's. The visit of Abdul Rashid Shaheen National Conference MP from Baramulla had also raised eyebrows in Kashmir political and social circles. True, an ordinary Kashmiri aspires for the resolution of Kashmir problem but he is not in favour of rushing through a solution that would infringe his fundamental right of self-determination. There is a need for exploring new avenues rather than pursuing the much beaten tracks.

History of the dispute has many lessons for General Musharraf to offer. One is here reminded of Sheikh Abdullah making frantic efforts in the United Nations to earn a credibility for himself for being a Kashmir leader much before his addressing the United Nations as Kashmiri leader. But, it was Sir Zafarullah Khan who took wind out of his sails by describing him as an Indian quislings. It was apt handling of Sir Zafrullah that made the Indian Prime Jawaharlal Nehru's Secretary, M.O. Mathai, write much later in his book *"My Days with Nehru"* that Sheikh Abdullah "contrary to expectations was 'more a liability than an asset'".

A DAY WITH PERVEZ MUSHARRAF

President Peryez Musharraf has been a part of our life- an intimate person for the past seven years. More intimate and closer, than many of our relations. I know more about him than I know about my first and second cousins. This could be true about millions in the South-Asia. I know what his son Bilal is doing and what are the fads and fancies of his daughter Ayla. But I hardly know any thing about the children of my first cousins who live just six or seven miles away from my abode of peace. Truly I know as much about him as my children know about Shahruxh Khan, Salman Khan, Aamir Khan, Preeti Zenti, Rani Mukherjee and Priyanka Chopra or about Wasim Akram, Rahul Dravid, Mahender Singh Dohni, Yonus Khan, Abdur Razzak and Shoiab Malik – thanks to the idiot box that has made many of the politicians intruders into our life- majority of them unwontedly- unwarranted and unwanted.

President Pervez Musharraf has been no exception. It has been a trait of all politicians in power in the sub-continent to use official media for projecting their large than life image. There is hardly a television that does not beam Pervez Musharraf into our sitting room or lobby; some projecting him as naik and some as *khalnaik*. There can be no denying that much before the boom of television channels in the Sub-Continent PTV had highest viewing in twin cites of Jammu and Srinagar. Serial dramas and musical programmes of Pakistan Television were the greatest craze in many states of the Northern India till the close of past century. In Jammu and Kashmir, as a matter of fact, PTV was watched more for news and current affairs rather than for dramas and musical programmes. It has been a part of Kashmir psyche to listen to Pakistan Radio or watch PTV.

The media experts, political analysts and Kashmir strategists in New Delhi strongly believed that Pakistan Television was influencing the minds of people. Taking a cue from Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah banning listening of Azad Kashmir and Radio Pakistan in fifties Governor Jagmohan in 1990 got reception of PTV Jammed in Kashmir. Notwithstanding government banning listening Azad Kashmir Radio and arresting those violating the diktat of Sheikh Abdullah the programmes like *Zarbi-Kaleem*, *Manat Dub* and *Ladishah* were highly popular till the arrival of television. Notwithstanding arm twisting policies of Sheikh Abdullah from 1947-1953 or of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad 1953-1961 people took a lot of interest in the affairs in the country carved out of the sub-continent by Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. It would be betraying history not to mention that majority of Pakistan leaders had larger than life image in Kashmir. Majority of Pakistan leaders who failed at the litmus tests of allowing democracy to thrive in their country or providing good governance were always hailed by Kashmiris perhaps for their unequivocal support for the much cherished cause of right to self-determination. Notwithstanding General Muhammad Ayub Khan being the first military ruler of Pakistan people in Kashmir religiously heard his monthly radio broadcasts. It was this radio speech that inspired from them. After Ayub Khan it was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that stood high in the estimation of an ordinary Kashmiri. Inspite of terrifying communication blockades and denial of information people in Kashmir knew more about Pakistan than they knew about their own state. Concepts like right to information, being alien to the state in fifties, sixties and even seventies, the works like 'Friends not Masters' by General Muhammad Ayub Khan and "Myth of Independence" by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto were popular among the younger generation. The younger generation in late sixties and mid-seventies were fascinated by "the mercuric and seemingly conflicting life of Bhutto" and they looked in the then *Quaid-i-Awam* a future Quaid-i-Azam for Pakistan. Popularity of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto found many friends and admirers for an Indian Parliamentarian Piloo Mody in Kashmir for his memoir "Zulfi My Friend" (1973). It is ironic that even the person who hanged one time hero of Kashmiris attained popularity in a good section of younger generation in mid eighties. General Zia-ul-Haq who put Bhutto to gallows found lots of admirers amongst Kashmiri youth in mid eighties and people reacted equally on his "assassination" as they had on Bhutto's. After Zia-ul-Haq's death in a plane crash it has been a belief with majority of Kashmir observers that the graphs of Pakistan leaders in Kashmir has considerably gone down. Now

of all Pakistan leaders President Pervez Musharraf's popularity in Kashmir is at the nadir, reason perhaps has been his vacillating stand on Kashmir.

It was believing in the disbelief to see long queues of youth outside bookshops on the fashionable Residency Road waiting for their turn of buying a copy of 'In the Line of Fire' a memoir of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf. It was amazing to see that many students bought this book out of their *Eidi* (Eid Money). The interest shown by the younger generation in reading Pakistan Presidents spawned many questions in my mind- is it immense publicity of this book that has sparked interest in the younger generation that I believe is more interested in Shahrukh Khan and Preeti Zinti or do the younger generation see a role model in smart Pakistan President who in his youth days was an average student or it is his progressive outlook that has been fascinating them. I read reviews by fellow journalists like Ayaz Amir of The Dawn and Siraj Wahab of The Arab News, who dismissed this book as nothing but a story of self-glorification. The book written in 'commando style', spreading over 352 pages made me live with Pakistan President for a full day. Reading him was not like watching him on television and getting fatigued with his mannerism and rhetoric but it was as good as traveling with him through the memory lane. The lucid style of the book gripped me for full day.

The story of his life unfolded before me my own life and the life of a whole generation of people born in the twilight of the British Empire and the life after the birth of India and Pakistan as independent countries. No moment I read the first sentences of the book-let me reproduce them here: "These were troubled times. These were momentous times. There was light of freedom; there was darkness of genocide. It was the dawn of hope; it was twilight of empire," the whole drama of mayhem and macabre of 1947 and its implication on Kashmir unfolded before me. It reminded me of piles of literature and hundred of stories written on agony and pain that followed those momentous days of freedom, Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan after which the first chapter of the book has been titled, Black Margins by Saadat Hasan Manto; the Dunghills by Mumtaz Mufti; Wagha Canal by Fikr Tausnvi, The Vultures of the Parsi Cemetery by Ali Imam Naqvi and scores others. In fact there is a whole genus of partition literature in the two countries. Reading about childhood of Pakistan President was living through one's own childhood- childhood is not priesthood as many of reviewers have attacked him for having been truthful about his having taken fancy towards some girls in his neighbourhood. The book

provides an insight into making of Pakistan army officers and their training. It enables one to understand as what has been promoting Pakistan army to intervene, at all important junctures in the history of that country. It transpires from the book that it has been Pakistan political leadership whether in power or outside that has been dragging the military leadership to intervene. National political personalities have been complaining against political leaders to the army chief. At many places I got a feeling that I was browsing through the *Scenario*- famous American magazine that publishes screenplays of great Hollywood movies. The chapter titled "Coups and Counter Coups" has the potential of being translated into a great movie. It only needs ingenuity and imagination. The book has the potential of providing stories and screenplays for a dozen of films- blockbusters.

The book is grand narrative that provides deeper insight into contemporary politics of Pakistan and its role in the emerging geo-strategic situation in Asia.

Me, My Children and General Pervez Musharraf

"Mediocre" would be too harsh a word. I was an average student in seventies as were many of my pals and buddies and like all average Kashmiri students I also admired Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for his articulation. I liked him for his supremely beautiful presentations on Kashmir in the United Nations. I admired him for removing the stigma of 'client state' which Pakistan had earned as a member of SEATO and SENTO military pact. Oldies in our locality saw legendary Sir Zafarullah Khan of forties and fifties reborn in him. I do not know if they had ever heard his speech. But it was on the tip of the tongue of everyone squatting in mosque *hamams* during winters he had not only overwhelmed Indian representatives but made the lion of Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah to mew- and as Nehru's Secretary M.O. Mathai puts it "he made the word 'stooge' and 'quisling' stick to him to the disadvantage of Indian interests and changed this asset of Nehru into a liability for India". I had read Sir Zafarullah's marathon speech. I admired his skill as a powerful advocate, But listening and watching on television speaking makes a difference. Bhutto we heard and we watched him on television, speaking as an ace politician, diplomat and a statesman. We heard him as a rubble rouser and a great rhetorician. In sixties and seventies he was darling of students' community- even friends belonging to Jamait-e-Tulaba influenced by Maulana Mawdudi's literature who opposed him for his vague concept of Islamic-socialism admired him for his Kashmir policy. Many students parroted his speeches marked by alliterations: "The people of Kashmir were in revolt unmistakably in revolt. The problem can be settled, will be settled, has to be settled only then would Pakistan live in peace with its great neighbor."

Students in sixties and seventies were deeply imbued in politics; I do not know what the campus scenes looked like those days. True, in sixties and seventies students loved to talk about Dilip Kumar and Madhubala, Dev Anand and Waheeda Rehman, Rajinder Kumar and Vijayanti Mala, admired Rajesh Khanna and Mumtaz they would remain glued to transistors for days together for listening to commentaries of India-Pakistan Cricket match. They passionately supported Pakistan, burst crackers on Pakistan winning cricket matches but they were equally pro-active in politics. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was popularly called was the role model for many young men those days. I do not know if there is a role model now for the young Kashmir generation which was born under the shadow of bayonets, learnt to walk under the cascades of bullets and grew up with the explosions of bombs. I do not know how this generation- (which I would prefer to call as 'war generation') is looking at the emerging political scenario in the state. How do they look at the country that my generation saw as an eldorado. Do they have same dreams as we had as young men bubbling with enthusiasm. Since I do not have much of interaction with this generation so it will be difficult for me to talk about their aspirations and political moorings. I was recently convinced that the interests of younger generation in Pakistan affairs continues as it was thirty years back during our college and University days. When I saw number of students flipping through the pages of 'In the Line of Fire' much publicized autobiography of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, in bookshops on the Posh Residency Road and also some leaving the bookshops with a copy of the book. The question whether they admire Pervez Musharraf same way as youth in our times used to admire Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and youth with pan-Islamic outlook admired President Zia-ul-Haq or have just academic interest in the Pakistan affairs has remained unanswered. The question needs to be addressed by the academicians working in the goody-goody premier academic institutions of the State. I had an opportunity of talking to some young political leaders in their thirties who shot into stardom of Kashmir politics because of their birth in political families or after bidding adieu to arms. Unlike politicians of the yester-years the younger generation of politicians has had greater opportunities of having interaction with India and Pakistan leadership. This frequent interaction particularly with President Musharraf has mellowed down this young leadership by and large born with a silver spoon in their mouth. This young leadership which recently returned to Kashmir after meeting President Pervez Musharraf is with pessimism. This they call as pragmatism. They strongly believe that

Pakistan wants to wriggle out of Kashmir situation. While I talked to them the famous speech of Bhutto on 25 October 1965 that had invigorated Kashmir leaders in mid-sixties echoed in mind: *"This long-drawn out tragedy can only end in victory of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and in the vindication of honorable position which our country and our people have taken.... We tell you and shall face complete extermination, we shall face complete destruction, and we shall never dishonor pledge. We shall fight by the people of Jammu and Kashmir and we shall honor that pledge irrespective of what Security Council does, irrespective of what great powers do. This is a part of our faith it is ingrained and enshrined in our civilization."*

After talking to these young leaders I could believe that this "grain of faith that was enshrined in Pakistan civilization" has etherized from contemporary Pakistan leadership. If these leaders are to be believed President Musharraf is convinced that Pakistan despite historically being on a strong wicket is playing on a slippery ground. It is ironical that Pervez Musharraf who is wary of clergy in his own country is nearer to the Hurriyat Conference dominated by clerics-some with public base and some without that. He perhaps does not know that in Kashmir it is not the leaders that matter but the 'sentiment'.

In the emerging political scenario it seems that contemporary Pakistan leadership having decided to forfeit the claim of Kashmir, including perhaps removing alphabet "K" from its name, if India agrees to Pervez Musharraf's latest four point formula which is nothing but an improved version of the 1953 constitutional position for the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the Kashmir leadership calling itself as moderates is on a cross road. With increasing number of heir-apparent to the bible of 'self-governance' this leadership caught up in dilemma about its role in the emerging political scenario where the stakeholders to power politics are many including. 'To be or not to be' syndrome about its participation in 2007 or 2008 elections Assembly has already started tormenting the young moderate leaders who relished solipsism born out of their belief of being heroes of the Kashmir Struggle for Right to Self-Determination or what in simplest terms was called as "azadi". Where will this brigade of young leaders from traditional political families with lot of wealth & huge mansions lead the great crowd of children of lesser god haunt and horrify me as the sharp claws and bloody teeth of Christopher Lee had horrified me when I saw the great Hollywood movie Dracula for the first time.

My father left for the heavenly abode with 'unrealized dreams', people of my generation lived through uncertainty both compromising and confronting and I do not know about my children- if Pervez Musharraf's utterance are taken as authentic yet another era of uncertainty waits for them.

THE BITING BARB OF KASHMIR POLITICS

Every year new phrases and clichés are added to Kashmir lexicon. The latest addition is 'out-of-box solution for Kashmir'. This cliché has gained a lot of currency in Pakistan and Kashmir. For majority of Kashmir dabblers — hawkers, vendors and leaders it has almost become a fashion to refrain this trite. From Mirwaiz Mohammad Umar Farooq to author M.S. Pampori; from Umar Abdullah to Mohammad Yousuf Taragami; from Hakim Mohammad Yasin to Amitab Mattoo every one who wants to be in news has been parroting this newly coined phrase. What this out-of-box solution means is a big riddle. It is an enigma that is hard to decipher and decrypt. We are made to believe that it means a solution of Kashmir problem outside the ambit of the United Nations Resolutions that will bring in permanent peace to the South Asian region. This meaning attributed to 'out-of-box' phrase gained media credence after two Kashmir leaders Mirwaiz Umar Farooq of Awami Action Committee and Mohammad Yasin Malik of JKLF talked about solution of Kashmir outside the ambit of the United Nations resolutions in Islamabad under the canopy of Pakistan Government. Mirwaiz Umar amplified the phrase further at a press conference at Islamabad where he clearly stated that the United Nations Resolutions could be ignored and religion had no place in the resolution of Kashmir. The statement which was made after young leader meeting Pakistan President General Parvez Musharraf and had perhaps the approval of Pakistan establishment, ruffled many a feather.

Whether the statement made by Mirwaiz has the approval of Pakistan leadership it set a chain of reaction both in Pakistan and Kashmir. Two prominent and powerful Pakistan newspapers "The Nation" and "The

Pakistan Observer" in their editorials castigated the statement. The Pakistan Observer which is seen as pro-establishment and close to Pakistan President General Parvez Musharraf made a very candid comment and described it 'a major shift in APHC's known position on Kashmir' and saw it as an attempt to 'circumvent the Kashmiris' right to self-determination.' Analyzing the implications of the statement in view of Kashmir's political and geographic importance in the region the paper saw it 'closer to the Indian stand of Kashmir being its secularist show piece' The Nation published from Lahore known for its anti-establishment policy in its editorial has described Mirwaiz's statement as a 'mistake' aimed at 'pandering Kashmiri Pandits and Jammu Dogras'.

The statement made by Umar Farooq has raised a fundamental question about *raison d'être* for the Kashmir issue? Is Jammu and Kashmir State as it stood on August 14, a separate nation. If it is, what binds this nation together language, culture, race or religion. Is it nationalism that is the driving force for the ongoing 'movement' in the State? There can be no denying that Kashmir issue historically is an offspring of the two nation theory - legitimate or illegitimate depending upon from what angle to look at it and to what class of political belief you belongs to. The statement made by Mirwaiz is ostensibly a departure from the traditional beliefs of his family and party. One can comfortably construe from his statement that the two nation theory has lost its luster and gloss for him or he lacks knowledge of contemporary history of the sub-continent. But, seen in retrospect it has been the war between the 'nationalists' and the believers in the two nation theory propounded by Poet Philosopher of the East Dr. Mohammad Iqbal and carried forward by *Quaid-e-Azam* Mohammad Ali Jinnah that has provided vibrancy and vitality to Kashmir politics for the past sixty years. There was no cause for the United Nations to pass its 1948 and 1949 resolution had not the sub-continent been divided into India and Pakistan on the basis of two nation theory. In 1947, when India took Kashmir issue to the United Nation and blamed Pakistan of making an attempt to infringe its secularism, it was only after Sir Zaffarullah Khan's arguments of claiming Kashmir part of Pakistan on the basis of two nation theory that the United Nations adopted resolution guaranteeing right to self-determination. The United Nation's very tacitly recognized that Kashmir problem had its origin in religion and not nationalism or sub-nationalism. To defeat Pakistan claiming Kashmir fundamentally on the basis of religion the Government of India carried its trump card Sheikh Abdullah to the United Nation. Sheikh Abdullah spoke in the august

body that the state of Jammu and Kashmir had wedded to India for its secularism. It is history that the towering Sheikh Abdullah's nationalist philosophy failed to convince the United Nation and he had to bit the dust. Sheikh Abdullah concedes in his autobiography that he was a flop in the United States.

The young Mirwaiz is within his rights to shed his traditional beliefs or beliefs of his family and the party. Shedding skin after sometime is a human trait but grafting hide on a skin would be unnatural. He has every right to toddle on the path on which many others before him have treaded. Many politicians from Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to Gaffar Volunteer did not believe in the two nation theory- the mother ideology for the birth of India and Pakistan as independent dominions. Equally Mirwaiz has a right to bid adieu to one political ideology and embrace another. True, choice of religion or political faith is an individual's fundamental right but talking about deciding fate of people cannot be an individualistic decision. It has to be a collective decision, it has to be peoples decision.

The Kashmir leadership is tattered. There are as many groups as individuals. And every one of them has his funny ideas about ending of political uncertainty in the State. Some are overawed by Americans and they sing only nine eleven song. Some are tethered somewhere or other atop Rai Sania hills. Some have individual commitments. And some undoubtedly are committed to people and want the uncertainty that has brought nothing but suffering to people to end. "The leadership should shun their eccentricities" is the vox populi. This peoples voice found a very strong expression at the recently held seminar organized by The Kashmir High Court Bar Association. Many an important and independent intellectuals had gathered under the umbrella of the Bar Association at a beautiful hotel over a sumptuous lunch. Some thought provoking and realistic papers were presented by eminent jurists, lawyers, intellectuals and academicians. Most of the political leaders spoke in symphony but the notes of discord appeared immediately after the Association wanted to adopt a unanimous resolution that would send a message that the Kashmir leadership despite living in different apartments, was concerned with fortifying the foundations of the multi-story complex that houses them. True, the Bar failed to adopt a unanimous resolution but the Bar Seminar sufficiently provided an indicator that individualistic decisions do not have peoples approval. Whatever is not acceptable to people cannot be foisted on them.

There is a need for Kashmir leaders including Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Mohammad Yaseen Malik to understand that Kashmir 'history has many cunning passages and contrived corridors.' It would be main to think solution of a problem outside its historical context and moorings. The phrases like "out-of-box" solution do sound sonorous but they have a biting barb attached to them.

DIPLOMATIC IMPORTS

Pakistan President, General Parvez Musharraf wants to be different than many of his predecessors in office- iconoclast, unorthodox and progressive. He wants the phrase 'army dictator' that was suffixed to his name in media after having removed Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharief in a bloodless coup to be replaced by words like 'liberal', 'moderate' and pragmatic. In tune with this urge he has been taking one after another departures from the traditional policies pursued by Pakistan for the past fifty seven years. This desire has had a direct import on Pakistan's Kashmir policy. He 'jettisoned' fifty six year insistence on holding of a plebiscite for final disposition of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations resolutions of 1948. To ascertain the wishes of people of the State whether they wanted to join Pakistan or remain a part of India through the best possible democratic means of plebiscite or a referendum under the auspices of UN had an international mandate. But instead of this Pakistan President came up with one after another loose proposal for the resolution of the Kashmir problem. He offered number of fresh ideas- demilitarizing all parts of Kashmir; 'parceling of Kashmir into seven geographical regions, five on this side of LOC and two on the other side, joint management of the state of Jammu and Kashmir as it stood on August 14, 1947, self-governance for entire state of Jammu and Kashmir. These proposals were accompanied by a pledge that all efforts would be made to reduce the level of violence in the state and to plug any kind of infiltration from the other side. Many important international analysts like Peter R. Lavoy of Centre for Contemporary Conflicts, California, saw an element of 'sincerity' in General Musharraf's proposals. Most of Kashmir experts at

the international level hailed his 'flexibility'. Notwithstanding his insistence on retaining arm uniform he came to be known at the international level as a 'liberal' and 'well meaning' head of the State. But, the question that arises is has there been any headway on Kashmir or are there any indications of this human problem, which is the most dangerous nuclear flash point in the region getting resolved.

What made General Musharraf to dilute Pakistan's traditional stand on Kashmir is a different subject. Whether this change of stance on Kashmir was a result of General's over enthusiasm or United States harassment are subjects that need to be discussed separately. But, it would be naïve to connect change in Pakistan Kashmir policy directly to September 11, happenings in the United States. True, on September 12, 2001 the US Deputy Secretary administered a warning to two Pakistanis in Washington, Pakistan Ambassador to Washington, Maleeha Lodhi and Director General of ISI Lt. General Mehmood that in our their battle against terrorism "you will have to be either 100 percent with us or 100 percent against us." General Musharraf was pragmatic enough to join the United States in the war against terrorism. But what prompted General to dovetail Kashmir problem to this war against terrorism which had nothing to do with Kashmir's demand for right to self-determination is a jigsaw puzzle. The general perhaps believed that by joining the United States in its 'war on terrorism' he could barter away Kashmir solution. He had too many expectations from the United States and he believed that the new relationship would fortify his relations with that country forgetting what "Pakistan's greatest political thinkers, Dr. Eqbal Ahmed, had said about the relationship between the two countries. He had "likened relationship between the United States and Pakistan to that of an errant husband and his mistress. When in mood, the United States would overwhelm Pakistan with loving attention and generous gifts. But in tempestuous relationship it was never steady. And when Washington's ardor cooled it would abandon its South Asian partner without thought." United States got a new mistress buxom and pretty in India and old mistress had almost now lost charm for it. President Bush during his March visit to the South Asian region sufficiently suggested that it was not only 'de-hyphenating' the two mistresses in worldview but was charmed by the buxom one.

Has been the driving force behind Pakistan President's departing from traditional Kashmir policy and making one after another 'loose proposals'? Whether there is a rethinking on what Pakistan Foreign office

now 'subtly looks as faux pas' or not is a different question. The political overtures made by General Musharraf since 2002 have had its impact on the "on going movement for right to self-determination" in Jammu and Kashmir. Equally it has started changing political equations in the state. The Pro-right to self-determination camp has fragmented into bits. It got divided into as many camps as individuals in these organizations. There are as many as two dozen organizations in an area of a half-kilometer area across Zero Bridge at Raj Bagh, Srinagar area. Nicknamed as political B.B let me not amplify. Majority of these leaders and groups sang in symphony with the General Musharraf and hailed his proposals as pragmatic and rational. The only distinct and discordant voice in this cacophony has been Syed Ali Shah Geelani and some young political leaders in his faction of the Hurriyat Conference.

The spate of 'loose ending proposals' by Pakistan President emboldened many other leaders to come up with proposals outside the framework provided by the United Nation's resolution on Kashmir- to which India and Pakistan stand committed even today. The Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq without spelling out details has been talking of the United States of Kashmir (USK) - perhaps a sovereign independent country in most strategic area of South Asia. The word USK phonetically sounds more akin to USA - I do not know if the idea has also emanated from the State Department or is a pluck from his young mind. The proposal which at its face sounds innocuous and has many serious undertones which will have a direct bearing on the geo-strategic situation of the South-Asian region. Mirwaiz Umar's statement that China is a party for its holding a part of Kashmir provoked a statement from Pakistan Foreign office, is related to the concept of the United States of Kashmir. How far this idea is practical and pragmatic is a matter of debate and what could be its implication and who could be beneficiary from such statements needs an in depth study.

Another major import of General Musharraf's half-baked proposals has been that he got a new constituency in Kashmir. This new constituency comprises politicians that in Pakistan lexicon is termed as band of 'traitors of Kashmir of cause'. The National Conference President Umar Abdullah after his return from Pakistan has been showering all praises on General Musharraf. This is equally true of other political leaders owing allegiance to 'pro-accession' political parties. The visit of Umar Abdullah to Pakistan and reception accorded to him in that country made pro-Paki-

stan political activist gloomy but it has spawned an upbeat mood in the National Conference rank and file. If Pakistan fortifies its relations with new found allies in Kashmir and what could be the arrangement is at present just a matter of conjectures. The National Conference as could be made from the interview given by patron Dr. Farooq Abdullah to Kashmir Uzama, a sister publication of the Greater Kashmir suggests that the party is looking for a greater cooperation with the country it once vowed to destroy.

The General Musharraf's flexibility may earn him some applause in pro-India political parties in Kashmir or co-singers in "separatist parties" But what has been engaging the mind of international political analysts like Peter R Lavoy where will "Pakistan diplomatic frustration with India" lead? Will it bring militancy back to front burner and put peace process to back burner?" He has very aptly cautioned India, Pakistan and Washington about the negative implications of procrastination and suggested, "Kashmir question has set in motion certain dynamics that could make South Asia one of the world's most dangerous place once again unless all the three governments—Washington, New Delhi and Islamabad act quickly and decisively to put the normalization of Indo-Pak relations back on the front burner"

Yet Another Slogan

Slogans are born to die. This may not be true for other places in the world where they are born to be translated into reality by the leaders who raise and coin these slogans. In our subcontinent Mr. Gandhi of the 'loincloth and stick' raised the slogan of Swaraj and made it a reality. As very aptly said by Llyod I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber in their recent work on this great Indian leader that 'Gandhi meant to change the world as well as interpret it and he did.' Gandhi got inspiration for leading Indian struggle from great Russian writer Tolstoy who through his 'A letter to Hindoo' told him that India must resist England non-violently; to resist violently would be to yield to the conquerors.' Gandhi translated this aphorism through his vision, commitment, courage and determination into reality. Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah who according to K. Mcpherson, "Until the mid-1930's remained committed to the united India" and who after the Congress leaders betraying the "constitutional settlement" of communalism raised the slogan of separate homeland for the Muslims of the south Asia. He had set a goal in his mind. This goal according to Dr. Javid Iqbal (Islam and Pakistan Identity) was neither vague, nor was it based on vague religious romanticism. It was not to be achieved through military actions, violence or agitational politics, but through the cold logic of modern democratic process, and the right of the Muslims to self-determinations in the territories. Where they constituted a majority." According to Sharif al Mujahid one of his biographers, 'Quaid knew what he wanted and also knew how to get it'. He raised a slogan but saw its becoming a reality. As very rightly said by Mcpherson "towards end of his life he had nothing but 'idea of Pakistan". Whether it is Mr. Gandhi or Mr. Jinnah or

any other leader in the world- they raised slogans and translated them into reality.

Kashmir leaders are a class apart. They have a long history of raising slogans not for seeing them translated into reality but for furthering their political gains and making a fortune out of them. A cursory look at our most recent history- just seven years after the end of autocratic rule, the Kashmir leaders raised a dozen political slogans but hardly one was translated into reality. The Muslim Conference leadership at the time of partition of British India passed resolution after resolution for accession with Pakistan. On June Second 1947, the partition of the sub-continent was announced on July 19, 1947 that is hardly seventeen days after the announcement it passed a resolution for accession with Pakistan. It had a mandate to do so but this organization failed to see its resolution translated into reality and majority of its leaders instead pursuing their own slogan crossed over to the newly carved Azad Kashmir and joined the 'sarkar' to enjoy pelf and power. Notwithstanding a few muffled voices in support of 'accession to Pakistan' the slogan was in practice buried deep in the debris of Kashmir politics. After this no major political organization raised this slogan in absolute terms. True, the slogan was covertly raised by the Political Conference through his newly coined slogan "*Fitri Rujhan*" (Natural propensity) but in the din of the National Conference politics and Sheikh Abdullah's outbursts it died much before it would catch peoples' imagination. Sheikh Abdullah who always nursed an illusion that he was architect of accession of the state to India for his ideological unanimity with Nehru and Gandhi after receiving shocking drubbing from New Delhi launched the Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front. He and his lieutenant who always preferred to call himself "nothing but reflected glory of Sheikh" raised slogan of 'right to self-determination' and made people to cry for twenty two years from every rooftop "we want Plebiscite" ultimately not only dropped this slogan but buried it deep not to return. The burial brought them power, riches and what not. But it was ironical that the burial of this slogan spawned yet another chain of slogans- 'return to pre-1953 position', 'repealing of laws extending to the state after 1952', 'greater autonomy', 'internal autonomy' so on and so forth. There was hardly a public meeting where Sheikh and his party did not trumpet these slogans without meaning them to be translated into reality. The Sheikh would often describe his concept of autonomy not the end of struggle but means to achieve the end i.e. right to self-determination. To see the slogan of

autonomy as a reality committees after committees where constituted but never to meet. The Sheikh was catapulted to power. He ruled the State for seven years- then died and with him died the slogans that he coined to remain in power. For both Sheikh's son and son-in-law who made it to the seat of power after him no slogans came handy that could have helped them in flocking people behind them. The 1990 developments and after- with the slogan of "*azadi*" renting the air in every nook and corner of the valley not only swept the National Conference out of its feet but made it to search for legitimacy for continuation in the state politics. The abandoned slogans of 'autonomy' came once again handy to this party to rerun its politics in the state. The Chief of the National Conference and host of other leaders of this party being in wilderness it was only Prof. Saifuddin Soz who made all out efforts to provide grist to the idea of autonomy by organizing seminars in New Delhi. Soz did succeed in making many Indians debate on this idea but the National Conference failed to sell this slogan to the people as there were by and large no takers for it in the state both in the Muslim majority and minority areas of the state. The slogan of autonomy also died like its precursor 'our demand plebiscite'. The slogans like 'we want plebiscite', 'Our demand plebiscite' never rented the air again in the state not to speak of Farooq Abdullah's raising these slogan. Even those who espoused the cause of 'right to self-determination' for the past seventeen years have not dared to raise this slogan but instead coined yet another vague slogan of 'negotiated settlement'- which has also now outlived its utility for the conglomerate politicians.

The 'self-governance' is now a new slogan. Ironically this slogan was not born in Kashmir but it is one of many loose ending proposals piloted by Pakistan President General Parvez Musharraf. The concept is as fuzzy as all other proposals piloted by him during the past four years but in Kashmir it has found as many interpretations as politicians in the state. The "mainstream", "swimmers towards mainstream" and "pro-right to self-determination" all have their own interpretations of the slogans. Surprisingly the idea of 'self-governance' has been adopted by the People's Democratic Party as main ploy of its politics. There are all indicators that the party is adopting the slogan for its election campaign which may be held in 2007 instead of 2008. The party has evolved its own definition of the idea piloted by Pakistan President. The interpretation given for self-governance which includes non-application of the article 356 of the Indian Constitution to the State, state legislature having the right to elect or appoint the governor when read between the lines is nothing but reinter-

pretation of autonomy or 'revocation of laws' extended to the state after 1953 as trumpeted by the National Conference. The question is that if New Delhi agrees to revocations of laws extended to the state after 1953. If PDP leader is to be believed he is going with his understanding of self-rule to the United Nations- the arena that has to be the ceased wrestling ground for India and Pakistan diplomats for Kashmir trophy. This cannot happen without New Delhi's approval. New Delhi if understood in right perspective is now taking Kashmir again to the United Nations.

The Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz which is at present in good books of both the Indian and Pakistani establishment is clueless about the idea of self-governance, one is yet to hear about the political contours of the idea piloted by Pervez Musharraf. Syed Ali Shah Geelani has been looking at the idea as a "confused" concept. He does not agree that it was step towards the final resolution of Kashmir problem- dovetailing the two that is demilitarization and self-governance he looks at the idea through the lens of the UN resolutions- which envisages demilitarization that is total withdrawal of troops from entire state of Jammu and Kashmir and allowing self-rule as prelude to the holding of plebiscite in the state under the aegis of the United Nations.

Whatever the interpretation this concept also like many other woolly concepts, is bound to be slaughtered.

Jaw-jaw is better.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is an intellectual. If I deny it, will it make any difference? No it will not. He is internationally acclaimed as a suave and soft spoken economist and an academician. Born on September 26, 1932, in Gah village of West Punjab, now in Pakistan, known in childhood as Mohana he undoubtedly made it to the top in academics because of his commitment, dedication and hard work. One of his biographers has called him 'Karamyogi'- one who worships work. He undoubtedly has brilliant track record as an academician and an economist but does it mean that he is an ace politician and a statesman? It will be too early to put him to litmus test on this count. The question is had India ever a statesman Prime Minister. One cannot have an off the cuff answer to this question. But, there can be no denying that India had four best politicians- Prime Minister's Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bhadur Shastri, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Others by and large were hewers of wood and drawers of water in politics who by share chance of luck made it to the top slot in India. They have not left an indelible imprint as politicians.

I take a departure from the generally held view that Nehru was a statesman and I believe out of the four top Indian politician-Prime Ministers of India it was, in fact Mr. Vajpayee who had the streaks of statesmanship. Notwithstanding belonging to the saffron brigade- whose mainstay in politics has been Muslim-hating and Pakistan-bashing he opened a new chapter in the history of India-Pakistan relations and initiated a peace process. He humbled the advocates of hot-pursuit theory and pursued the goal of attaining peace in the region religiously. He made history by visiting Minar-I-Pakistan in the historic city of Lahore. The visit had great

political import, which undoubtedly had a bearing on the future relations of the two countries. It signified that the acrimony of the past has no place in new dispensation. It set-aside the impressions that India, particularly the hard-core Hindu chauvinists, were yet to recognize Pakistan as a sovereign independent country. True, gains of Lahore Visit were lost in the din of guns on the rugged mountains of Kargil. As very aptly stated by General V.P. Malik in his book on Kargil war, "The biggest casualty of Kargil war, apart from the lives lost on both the sides of LOC was in the form of trust and confidence between India and Pakistan". But it did not dampen the initiative and resolve of Mr. Vajpayee. Just two years after the Kargil 'the two nations decided to travel the high road to peace through Agra summit. The Agra Summit failed- it slowed down peace process but it did not terminate it. Fact of the matter is that Vajpayee never lost sight of peace in the region. He reinitiated peace process which received yet another serious jolt after the "attack on Parliament" on December 13, 2001. Not getting embroiled as to who was behind the Parliament attack- (which is dotted with so many ifs and buts) it brought India on the verge of making another history of war. To satiate the angered nation, India ordered immediate mobilization of its troops under operation *parakaram* towards the borders. The stand off continued for ten months, according to General Malik at least on two occasions India went to the brink of war. It was statesmanship of Atal Bihari Vajpayee that enabled him to cross once again the hump of mistrust between the two countries and conjure peace process from dust and ashes of war. True, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh carried forward the process which helped in covering one after another milestone in the relations. One after another CBM was executed. Notwithstanding skepticism about the CBMs with many key Kashmir politicians, if they could help in the resolution of core issue, there can be no denying that many important developments took place for the first time in the history of India-Pakistan relations. The opening of traditional routes that link two parts of Kashmir and allowing the people of the two sides move without passports and visa formalities was not only a way forward but a tacit admission that Kashmir was not like any other state of India or Pakistan but had a distinctive political position. Many like me saw these developments as highly positive with latent potential of helping in finding not "pragmatic"- (which many construe means maintaining status quo) but an amicable settlement of the Kashmir problem to the aspirations of the people. One admits that pace towards resolving the core issue was slower than snail's but it is better to move—albeit slow than not moving at

all. History teaches the politics of what I would call, "staticism" has not paid in the past and it was not going to pay in future. This politics is always fraught with dangers of spawning violence.

The question arises was the decision of halting the peace process in the wake of Mumbai blasts the right one. It is a matter of fact that the peace process had enabled the two countries to bridge the river of hate. Let me not debate who made Prime Minister to act in such a haste and rush to the conclusion that is full of negative implications. True, as very aptly summed up by a leading New Delhi news magazine Outlook, "Manmohan Singh's calibrated toughness has won much appreciation within the security agencies. They believe it has shown right measure of statesmanship," but same is not true about the Indian intelligentsia. It will not be an exaggeration to state that for the first time in the history that Indian intelligentsia has not accepted the decision of rolling back the peace process as biblical dictum or edict. They have in fact rejected the 'knee jerking attitude' adopted by Mr. Manmohan Singh. There is hardly any of the top Indian writers and journalists who has not criticized the policy of ending peace process and dissipating the gains made during the past three years. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's great admirer Khushwant Singh writes, "I think at this stage it is unfair to accuse President Musharraf's government of having a hand in ghastly killings of the innocent in Mumbai's train and suspending peace talks. We do not have hard evidence to nail it. Most of the men arrested on suspicion of complicity in the crime are Indian nationals.—The most important fact to bear in mind before drawing conclusion that Musharraf government itself is often a target of these subversives' (HT July 29, 2006). It is not an isolated voice; it is a chorus which has all acceptable Indian voices like Vinod Mehta, Karan Thapar, Prem Shanker Jha and Kuldip Nayar in it. All sing in symphony that to "jaw-jaw is better than to war-war" It will not be possible to quote all these acceptable and respected voices in this column, but at the cost of repetition let me re-state that there is a serious dissent note against Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's policy of calling of peace process. There is cue for Indian leadership in dealing with India-Pakistan relations from Atal Bihari Vajpayee—to sustain dialogue event after bouts of serious reversals.

I have often been writing that old bible in the North and South Blocks need to be replaced with the new testaments in tune with the changed and changing global scenario. If intellectual and academician

Prime Minister succeeds in introducing the new testament in the seat of power – it will perhaps help him in graduating to statesmanship as well.

All Roads Lead to Washington

I had not read his book, "Profiles in Courage;" I had not heard him nor had I seen his live footage; I had not then heard that he was a benchmark for American politics for his believing that each man must follow his own conviction and that courage was the most important to lead a nation; I had not even read Norman Miller who called him "existentialist" in politics. But his assassination in Dallas, Texas before he had crossed forty seven saddened many faces in Kashmir. Then I did not understand why should John F Kennedy's sudden death make people unhappy? (a place thousands of miles away. Those days three names would often be heard in many Kashmiri homes; Ayub Khan, (President of Pakistan), Ahmed Bin Bela (The Algerian Resistance Movement leader) and John F Kennedy (The President of USA).

Kashmiri by and large took lot of interest in the developments in the United States in the neighbouring countries like Soviet Russia and China. Of the two countries Russia was the most hated by the Kashmiris. This 'hate neighbor and love distant country syndrome' was not just a fluke but had both meaning and content.

True, of the two political parties, the Muslim Conference and the National Conference, the later was under the grip of the Communist. The communist ideologues from various parts of the sub-continent converged into Kashmir to steer the movement against feudal autocracy in a particular direction. As Khawaja Ahmed Abbas once told me, 'It was a laboratory for the Indian Communists to test their ideology'. It was the couple communist ideologue, B.P.L. Bedi and Fredi Bedi who drafted the Naya-Kashmir manifesto of the National Conference. This highly progressive

manifesto after its implementation undoubtedly changed social and economic landscape of the state and brought respite to tens of millions of landless people but despite the positive impacts of this programme, the communists failed to lure people towards their ideology and outlook. The National Conference in its ranks had many communist but they failed to influence the public mind.

The question is; why this ideology failed to influence the minds of people? was it strong religious grounding or the National Conference's half-hearted affair with this ideology. Yes, strong religious grounding had a major role but above all it was hate that common people particularly Muslims had for the Soviet Russia. Communists in Kashmir were, by and large, considered as soviet quislings and were not liked by the people. In comparison to Soviet Union, people by and large, had a liking for the United States. Surprisingly many Islamic Parties including Jammu and Kashmir Jamat-e-Islamia were considered as Pro-American. The birth of the Plebiscite Front was also seen American doing. This is what G.M. Sadiq believed. The love for the United States was for its supporting the cause of right to self-determination for the people of the State and hate for Soviet Russia was for it opposing it at every juncture in the Security Council.

The question arises why Soviet Russia sided with India on Kashmir issue despite the United Nation having passed many resolutions conferring this right to the people of the State. Kashmir was strategically important before India and Pakistan gained Independence and it continued to be so in the post-Independence era. As explained by Mahnaz Ishphani, a perspective student of South Asian geopolitics, "With the partition of the Sub-Continent. Kashmir itself became of even greater strategic value than in imperial times. Its military relevance for both India and Pakistan lay in its location and its usefulness for each state's Defence posture." Notwithstanding Soviet Russia and the United States having their own stakes in Kashmir, a common Kashmiri saw USA as one of great advocates for its cause and it was for this reason that he would get interested in developments of that country. It was for this reason that pall of gloom had descended on Kashmir on the assassination of handsome President John F Kennedy. The man in the street would always pooh-pooh Soviet leadership for having vetoed resolution of Kashmir problem in the Security Council. The Russian leadership was the most hated not by urban Muslim elite but also by the common illiterate Kashmiri, who saw great villains in

them.

The United States for supporting the right to self-determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir as had accrued to them through the UN resolution and holding of plebiscite in the State had brought this distant country near to people of the state. Some prominent changes took place in its established Kashmir policy. Altaf Gauhar in his marvelously written book "Ayub Khan Pakistan's First Military Ruler" says, 'US regarded the Chinese invasion of India as a part of global communist strategy to overwhelm the 'free world. For more than a decade the Americans had been trying to wean away from the Communist influence, the Chinese action in the Himalayas gave them an opportunity they had been looking for and they immediately proceeded to extract the maximum advantage regardless of their other commitments in the region.' It was only after this what Prof. Robert Wirsing called US "started 'judging' UN intervention" or "role expansion" in Kashmir as 'impractical'. Notwithstanding Kennedy being author of new Kashmir policy Kashmiris were saddened on his death. Kashmir despite, a change in established US policy continued to dominate the debates and discussions in the Security Council. It echoed with more resonance after 1965 and continued to be so till India and Pakistan signed Simla Agreement in the wake of Pakistan's military debacle in Bangladesh. After that the issue was almost put into cold storage.

Over a period of time there has not been much of change in the US policy towards Kashmir. It continues to believe in the 'impracticality' of implementation of UN resolutions in Kashmir. Notwithstanding the drift in its policy the question is; why majority of Kashmir leaders-those talking about autonomy within the Indian Constitution; those demanding a sovereign and independent status for the state and even those believing in accession with Pakistan are looking towards Washington for a solution.

From 1947 to 1993, hardly any Kashmir leader visited Washington to plead before the State Department for the resolution of Kashmir problem. Abdul Ghani Lone was the first Kashmiri pro-right to self determination leader to visit Washington in 1993. The United States interest in Kashmir renewed, as I believe, in 1984, when John Ganthier Deen, The US Ambassador to New Delhi visited Srinagar and rebuffed Farooq Abdullah for his statement about the change in US Kashmir policy. Its interest redoubled in the state after 1991 armed uprising in the State and since then US officials have been visiting Kashmir regularly and interacting with Kashmir leaders. US official are not only updating themselves about

Kashmir but have also been dropping suggestions to leaders to redraft their policies. In 1996, then the US Ambassador Frank Wisner had vehemently suggested the Hurriyat leaders to participate in the Assembly elections. He had supporters for his idea in the conglomerate but for lack of courage they kept aloof from these elections. After Wisner many American intellectuals, academicians and senators have been visiting Kashmir and many Kashmir leaders have been visiting Washington. It would not be out of context to say that it is no more New Delhi and Islamabad that is focal point of Kashmir leaders. But all their eyes are set on Washington. Mohammad Yasin Malik, Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, had been in the United States for about three months in 2006 where he, besides participating in Kashmir American Council conference, participated in a number of other Kashmir related meetings and talked to students, academicians and officers of the state Department. Close on heels to follow him was Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Chairman Hurriyat Conference, who besides participating in the OIC meeting in New York, met Pakistan President General Musharraf, Assistant Secretary of the State Department and many others. Whether the two young leaders from "separatists camp" discussed the common agenda with the opinion makers and policy framers in that country is a big question. There can be no denying that Washington is the key player in global affairs and many a strings of Kashmir problems have their ends in the White House. There is nothing wrong in believing that all roads lead to Washington but it is million dollar question as how Washington looks at Kashmir problem in the changed global politics. To enable Kashmir leaders understand the changed global politics, it should facilitate travel of all Kashmir leaders to the fulcrum of global politics- Washington, enabling them to draft a common agenda for discussion but United States' State Department is adverse towards some leaders.

Shrouds from Pakistan

Dribble in an ocean: that is how I felt among the millions of the faithful that had converged on the holy city of Makkah during the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar to circumambulate the first mosque of the world to walk through the deserts, to sleep on barren hillocks and to move in multitudes to stone the devil. Draped in two unhemmed white sheets of cloth, the top covering the torso and the bottom secured by a waistband and a pair of sandal, streams of humans from all directions converge on Kabba- the House of Allah to perform a series of ritual acts symbolic of the life of Ibrahim and Hajarrah. True, in this sea of humanity races and nationalities evaporate, colors dissolve and languages merge and a common language -*talbiyah* that is total submission to Almighty Allah emerges. Arabs, Turks, Persians, Indonesians, Malaysians, South-Asian, Central Asian, Africans and Europeans all lose their fads and fancies and become one- but there is something that defiantly distinguishes them from a race that claims to be one of the most intelligent races in the world. Notwithstanding, Islam having arrived into Kashmir through Central Asia, after having passed through many cultures and mixed up with many a local tradition we are by far the best Muslims perhaps more committed to religion than many in other parts of the world. But it is indiscipline incarnate that distinguishes us from rest of the Ummah- we are perhaps the most disciplined lot in the world perhaps the cause of our tragedy.

Should I say 'indiscipline' is the tragic flaw of this tiny race living in perpetual pain for the past more than four centuries. It is this flaw that has been pushing us from pain to excruciation and agony to torment with no hope of coming out of the nadir that now seems part of our destiny.

It needs not to be taken as self-lashing or self-tanning but this has been a realization very strongly dawned upon me in the Holy cities of Makkah and Madinah. When I saw that the only race without an identity was the Kashmiri. No doubt in Ihram all identities are dissolved but after Ihram is dropped majority of races are recognized by their traditional dresses, costumes and flags. It is a great spectacle to see cascades of humanity in different colours adorning the precincts of Haram. The Turks- men in grey Safari suits and women wearing grey long coats, trousers and white head gears squat outside the Haram on white marble much before they enter the Holy mosque for offering prayers and performing the tawaf (circumambulation) around Kabba. A leader or a priest explains the gathering about all the prayers and rites involved. After attuning them to spiritual aspects of the rites and prayers, he leads them inside the Holy mosque. Inside the holy mosque, it is the head of the party who reads out all the invocations and prayers and other pilgrims refrain. Same is true of the Iranian pilgrims- men dressed in beautiful suits and women draped in long white or black cloaks sit on the outer lawns of the holy mosque and an *ayotallah* or a cleric narrates to them the history of the shrine, importance of Hajj- the fifth pillar of Islam and all the pre-Islamic practices, which were based on ignorance and how Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) abolished these practices and made Hajj once more "a model of piety, fear of Allah, purity, simplicity and austerity." He teaches them about the rites and prayers involved. After having given them the fullest historical and spiritual background of the rites and prayers he leads his party inside the holy mosque. Iranians, I am convinced, are the most disciplined nation. Same is true of the pilgrims from Indonesia, Malaysia, Africa and Central Asia. The only pilgrims that moved around in the twin holy cities like rovers- wanderers were from Kashmir. This leaderless crowd was the most disappointing sight in a highly disciplined gathering of about five million Muslims from all over the world. I did not believe myself that this leaderless tiny nation could be leaderless in performing their religious obligations as well. It is ironic, that many a time we are mistaken as Iranian, Turk, Pakistani and Afghani perhaps our total resemblance to these races but hardly people ever recognize us as Kashmiri. It was surprising that the barbers outside Marwa gate of the haram who mostly hail from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh mistook us as Turks. It may be a moot point for anthropologists as to how we resemble more with Iranians, Turks and Afghans than with other races in South-Asia.

Majority of the pilgrims carried flags of their countries ahead of their caravan. Even the Indian Muslims carried tricolors ahead of their caravans. But the Kashmiris carry no flag while tracking the sand dunes in Arfat, Musdalifa and Mina. I did not see them even moving in groups. I could not believe myself that we are so badly individualistic and lack cohesiveness that binds nations and societies together. However, in keeping with their political propensity I spotted some pilgrims from Kashmir moving as a part of the caravan carrying green- crescent and star flags- Pakistani flag. It is perhaps what Ghulam Mohudin Kara once had called as natural instinct that works as a driving force for making Kashmiri pilgrims to identify with Pakistani Muslims rather than with Indian Muslims even during the holy pilgrimage.

It was disappointing to note that majority of pilgrims from this beautiful land with a strong spiritual and religious traditions were ignorant about the invocations and rites involved in Hajj. A large chunk of pilgrims, I found were totally ignorant about the dos and donots of Hajj. It was shocking that a good number of pilgrims did not make it to Arfat, Musdalif and Mina during the days of Hajj but preferred to remain in hotels. On learning this I rebuked myself and in my heart of hearts castigated the clerics running huge seminaries and fattening on donations from people and countries and doing nothing for *deen* except creating dissensions in the already disjointed nation. There is hardly a locality that does not have a seminary- and these seminaries instead of producing religious scholars that could play a catalytic role in changing Kashmir society have been churning out mendicants. The level of religious awareness amongst Kashmiri Muslims, particularly from rural areas, is not only disappointing but ignoble. If I had my way- I would latch offices of all these so-called religious associations that are more interested in spreading dissension rather than making people aware of the fundamentals of *deen*. Many a pilgrims believed that Hajj was visiting Kabba and going around it and pacing between the mounts Safa and Marwa. They had never learnt that Hajj involved a different set of rites than just visiting the holy mosques in Makkah and Madinah.

The only lesson, I believe, that had been tutored to majority of pilgrims was that for entering portals of Jannah. They must get Pakistani cloth (latha) for shrouds and soak the same in the holy waters of Zam Zam. I saw scores of Kashmiri pilgrims buying cloth for shrouds from Pakistanis and soaking the same in Zam Zam waters and drying the same outside the

haram. I could see many times Saudi police chasing away people drying cloth for shrouds outside the Haram. True, there is no religious sanction for this belief but it is perhaps the political sentiment that has been living with Kashmiris for the past sixty years that haunts them even during the hajj and makes them buy shrouds from Pakistan.

I HAD A DREAM

I had a dream- a pleasant dream and a dream I wished not to end!

I saw a mega dance! A grand pageant of colours, music and dance atop Raisania Hills with whole of New Delhi in the backdrop. The set looked elegant and elaborate with lots of buntings and colorful balloons. It was a *basant*. I admired the ingenuity of the art director who had put up the set. Mohammad Yasin Malik, Shabir Ahmed Shah, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Mohammad Ashraf Saharia were singing a chorus! a melodious chorus; a huge troupe of extras – Prof Bhat, Maulvi Abbas, and many others whose names I do not remember were miming their leaders. There were lots of bystanders rejoicing the drum beats and tapping their feet in rhythm. Those who were distinct by their demeanor and mannerism were Fazal Haq Qureshi, with a coxcomb on his head, Nayeem Ahmed Khan stroking his moustaches, Altaf Ahmed Fantosh, scratching his beard, Javed Ahmed Mir sucking his thumb and Eidie munching his gums. It was Rumba Salsa kind of show. I was surprised at the coordination in their movements, steps and beats of the drum. I did not believe it, how could Yash Chopra have cast these veteran politicians for his yet to be released Hindi film- “the Great Circus on Raisina hills”. Every one of these “politicians” is a leader “independent thinking leader”. How could they act on the directions of a cine director. In their own right they have had a good track record of sacrifices and ‘commitments’. They are highly individualistic- self is important to them. Had it been Dr. Farooq Abdullah and some other politician resembling in mannerism (K.N. Singh of yesteryear) talkies dancing with his troupe, I would believe it. Farooq Abdullah is versatile - a born actor who can play any role – tragic Dilip Kumar, frolic Kishore

Kumar and romantic Dev Anand. He knows all dances- from Kathak to Salsa. I could not believe how these veteran politicians could turn into performing artists. And above all how could there be coordination in their steps, body movements and the band. It was more than a jigsaw puzzle to me. It was like old-time '*Adbi Shama Moma*' which the best of our writers could not resolve. I tried to convince myself that nothing is impossible in this world. Much before I could complete my analysis within the dream the alarm in my old Faverluba timepiece sounding like a gothic bell of Jamia-Masjid of my childhood woke me up and robbed me of this beautiful dream.

The dream ending was abrupt; it was terrific. I did not like abrupt ending of such a pleasant dream. I loved to watch my young leaders singing and dancing in unison. I shut my eyes to resume the dream and see my young leaders perform as good artists but failed. The dream jilted—I could not see coordination between the drum and steps of my leaders but it set me thinking and reminding me of my own writing, 'schism and Kashmir politics are made for each other'. Like one time advertisement campaign of the Wills cigarette! These lines repeatedly appeared before my eyes. I wished that my aphorism proved wrong. I prayed for the birth of a "cine director and choreographer" that could really bring them together and make them perform in unison to bring mirth to the multitudes of the suffering people. Can there be a "cine director" or a choreographer like Farah Khan that could bring coordination in their steps and movements? Finding an answer to this question was groping in darkness. In spite of my being optimist there seemed no light across the tunnel. It was like looking for "the *tooba-tree*" in the Shalimar garden.

I was reminded of my interaction with many of these politicians. It is not faith that divides them; it is not political beliefs that separate them and it is not power that is yet miles away from them that divides them. Is it clash of egos that has drawn a vertical and lateral wedge in their ranks? Is it really "the agencies visible and invisible" that my friends in Mushtaq Enclave, our own Fleet Street, frequently talk about that have driven a wedge in the conglomerate once known as All Parties Hurriyat Conference. Is it the 'French Pastry cake' in the middle that has resurrected cat in them? Is it self that has taken precedence over the cause?

My half-dream set into motion a whole range of thinking process. There can be no cine director or a choreographer who could bring in coordination in my great actors- the actors I had started loving after hav-

ing been disappointed by the previous ones for their performance. I did admire Sheikh Abdullah, the great actor whom many in my childhood nick named *Budhbozgar*; (old magician) when I was a tot I looked for a replica for this giant of a man in the pages of fairytales. He sometimes appeared to me like a character from the Arabian Nights with all magic power to vanquish and conquer his adversaries. I believed he would take me on his phoenix wings to the Elysian land. I believed he was phantasmagoria who could not be enthralled by any spell or magic but little did I then know that like a rabbit that he would follow the carrot to the snare. Little did then I know that in history he would go as a 'self-conceited dwarf'. I did expect new actors to grow, read their scripts thoroughly and perform to their mettle. Mere actors cannot make a good show; they need a good choreographer and a director who can ensure coordination in their movement. A good performance could be cathartic for the suffering multitudes.

In those old theatre days we had good directors but bad actors. We had philosopher-poet of the East as our Director but he also failed to bring in coordination in our actors: thus a flop show, then the great lawyer who won a nation state through a typewriter, also failed to put our theatre in order. True, we graduated from theatre to cinema but this time the director notwithstanding having all the facilities like high-tech camera, lights, master computers and other props could not bring out the best in these actors.

I crave for the dream that was disturbed by the alarm of timepiece. When I saw Omer Farooq, Yasin Malik, Shabir Shah and Ashraf Sehrai dancing as great performers who understood beat and rhythm for putting a great performance, I enjoyed their dancing and no body can kill me for my dreams. Dreams are above law and outside the dragnets of authority but if I tell my young actors that it was steadfastness that made Mohammad Ali Jinnah, The Quaid-e-Azam and Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi the Mahatma. I will be ridiculed by my young actors who call expediency as pragmatism

Hurriyat heading where?

All Parties Hurriyat Conference is confronted with a very serious challenge. In the history of pro-right to self-determination political parties in the state it is for the first time when an organization of a very high political standing has suo moto decided to enter into a dialogue with New Delhi without any pre-conditions. One of the earliest pro-right to self-determination political parties to have a dialogue with New Delhi was the Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front. The logical conclusion of the two year deliberations between New Delhi and Srinagar was Sheikh Abdullah's return to power and dissolution of the Plebiscite Front. Differences between the Plebiscite Front and the Hurriyat Conference are many. The Plebiscite Front had one political stand. It demanded holding of a referendum in the state. It had one leader and had a complete pyramidal organizational structure with basic units spread all over the state with command at the top. But as compared to this All Parties Hurriyat Conference has no definite political stand; it has been suffering from inherent contradictions and has been wavering between negotiated settlements to Azadi. It has as many leaders and as its constituents with no cohesive bond. There is a unified command in this organization. The party has no organizational structure. It even has no district units. It is the people's support to the organization that has been binding it together. Despite the Plebiscite Front having had many political advantages over that of Hurriyat Conference, the latter collapsed like a pack cards before New Delhi when it came to a dialogue. Perhaps the organization was not trained in negotiating and did not have the necessary skill required for negotiating crucial issues like Kashmir dispute.

There are many questions that intrigue public mind on APHC's latest political stand and New Delhi's total cold response towards its gestures. It is believed that the initiative is more out of compulsion than conviction. The compulsion being more mounting pressure from New Delhi than diplomatic.

Immediately after Democratic Freedom Party leader, Shabir Ahmad Shah, announced that he was leaving for New to hold "unconditional" talks with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to resolve the Kashmir imbroglio, All Parties Hurriyat Conference summoned its executive and made a similar statement. Talking to newsmen after one hour meeting All Party Hurriyat Conference chairman, Abdul Ghani Bhat, announced its decision to attend the second round of talks with the Kashmir Committee headed by Ram Jethmalani in New Delhi. But he rejected participation in coming assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir. The statement made Bhat was different from the previous statements. Reference to Pakistan was mysteriously missing from his statement and secondly he did not call people to boycott the coming elections. True, Abdul Ghani Bhat stated that APHC would participate in any positive dialogue aimed at resolution of Kashmir issue." But tone and tenor of his press briefing was apologetic than political.

Those conversant with contemporary Kashmir history will find many similarities between the statements made by Sheikh Abdullah and Afzal Beg before starting a dialogue with New Delhi in 1973 and Hurriyat leaders and Shabir Shah at present. Like Sheikh Abdullah these leaders, instead of talking about Right to Self Determination and Azadi, have started talking about a 'place of honor and dignity.'

It needs to be seen as to where the party was heading to. It will either sink like the Plebiscite or swim like a swan to reach the other side of turbulent river who puts epitaph on this conglomerate needs to the watched-let us wait and watch.

Hurriyat-Jethmalani dialogue

All Parties Hurriyat Conference in a highly noteworthy move accepted invitation for talks by the Kashmir Committee leader and the former Union Law Minister Ram Jethmalani. Whether All Parties Hurriyat Conference has understood inner dynamics of holding a dialogue with Kashmir Committee is out of some inherent compulsions of the conglomerate that will haunt the public mind till the dialogue either reaches to its logical conclusion or ends in a failure. It would be too early to predict about the future of these talks. The decision by the multi-party combine to accept the offer for talks should be welcomed by every one aspiring for the peaceful resolution of Kashmir problem. The party deserves an appreciation has understood dynamics of a dialogue even if it with an indirect emissary of Government of India. Dialogue is a very viable and vibrant medium that helps in the resolution of most complex issue. But there are some essentials for holding a dialogue, one, clear agenda; two, sincerity of purposes; three, accommodating each other's point of view the party and fourth flexibility of attitudes. Much before initiating a proper dialogue All Parties Hurriyat Conference needs to draft a clear agenda for a dialogue with Mr. Jethmalani. It needs not to confuse the conditions for a dialogue with that of the agenda of the dialogue. The Party shall have to map out a dotted track for the dialogue that could prevent it from getting embroiled in the digressions and diversions that such dialogues are susceptible. It cannot be free for all matches. The conglomerate shall have to identify a team of skilled negotiators for the dialogue. The mandate with its scope and limits for the negotiators shall have to be sought in advance.

It is naïve of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Chairman Abdul Ghani

Bhat to call Kashmir Committee as non-governmental initiative. The Kashmir Committee with its composition and complexion is a Government of India initiative. Deputy Prime Minister. Lal Krishan Advani, is on record to have not only owned the Kashmir Committee but given it full blessings for holding a dialogue with the Hurriyat Conference. The the APHC leaders need not feel shy of talking to New Delhi and admitting the same publicly. Talking to the reporters at Srinagar Prof Bhat on Monday tried to extend new meanings to dialogue with New Delhi by stating that talks on principles means tripartite talks involving Pakistan and non-participation in elections. Instead of blindfolding itself to the realities and selling lies to the people the conglomerate needs to talk about stark realities. It also needs to amplify scope and limits of the dialogue with New Delhi. Kashmir leaders have had a dialogue with New Delhi in the past but these dialogues instead of getting translated into accords have failed to resolve the Kashmir dispute. The history of Indra-Sheikh Accord of 1975, can serve as lodestar for the APHC leaders for entering into a dialogue with New Delhi. The protracted Beg-Partasarthi dialogue if studied afresh, can APHC in identifying a road map for himself. True, Indra-Sheikh Accord of 1975 enabled Sheikh Abdullah to become Chief Minister and Mirza Afzal Beg Deputy Chief Minister but it failed to resolve the Kashmir dispute. Truth is that these leaders despite innumerable sacrifices in the past have become symbols of detestation. One of the important causes of failure of Indra-Sheikh Accord has been lack of agenda before the Plebiscite Front leaders initiated a dialogue with New Delhi.

Musharraf and APHC

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference after having mellowed down its political stand to a considerable level and New Delhi showing no response to its polite gestures it seems that the conglomerate is heading for a very tough and difficult phase. In its bid to initiate a dialogue with the Government of India, the Conglomerate leaders have been issuing both relevant and irrelevant statement. Mirwaiz Omer Farooq President of the Jammu and Awami Action Committee made a very sweeping statement a few days earlier when he stated that internal autonomy could be an alternative for total independence. The authenticity of the statement was doubted by many a Hurriyat supporters and it was stated that the young Mirwaiz had been quoted out of context. But, he removed all doubts about his statement when he repeated his statement in a private television channel programme. In fact the young Mirwaiz in the "Court-martial" programme of SAB TV clarified his latest position and stated that Pakistan will also have to fall in line with the Hurriyat Conference. The statement indicates that APHC is ready to accept autonomy within the framework of India constitution as a solution to the Kashmir problem. The new APHC stand is not much different from the political stand of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. Many other main stream political parties, including Peoples Democratic Party and Pradesh Congress Committee have been looking at greater autonomy within the framework of Indian Constitution as a solution to the Kashmir problem. It has been a matter of debate with the Kashmir observers in the country and outside whether greater autonomy within the frame work of Indian constitution could be a viable solution to Kashmir problem. Mirwaiz Omer Farooq or his Awami Action

Committee is within his rights to think about autonomy as an alternative to total independence or fall in line with any of the 'main stream' political party. The tone and tenor of the Awami Action Committee Chief has also undergone a sea change. In his TV interview he avoided even making a reference to the United Nations resolutions and right to self determination. Instead he preferred to talk about "aspirations of people" and "a place of dignity; (a worn out cliché used by Sheikh Abdullah much before entering into accord with New Delhi in 1975).

If Mirwaiz Farooq's statements are as indicators, it seems that the Hurriyat Conference by and large has taken a much different stand about the resolution of Kashmir problem than that of Pakistan. The Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf delivering a strong speech at the inaugural session of the United Nations General Assembly demanded implementation of the United Nations resolutions guaranteeing right to self-determination. He blamed New Delhi for misusing rationale of the war against terrorism and making an effort of 'de-legitimising the Kashmiri freedom struggle'. He used very harsh words against on going electoral process in the state. It was for the first time after September 11, attack on United States that Pakistan President made such a 'hard hitting statement' against India in an international forum. What signals President Musharraf's speech in the United Nations was going to send to the Hurriyat camp needs to be seen. If Mirwaiz Omer's statements are a pointer, the APHC has considerably distanced from Pakistan. Now it depends upon New Delhi as how it could consolidate the 'estrangement' within the Hurriyat Conference.

Hurriyat Was Born To Divide

Kashmir Freedom Struggle and schism are made for each other. In fact factionalism has been an ugly chapter of contemporary Kashmir history. During the past seventy-three years of struggle Kashmir leaders have been head-on-collusion with one another at all important junctures of our history. Many call it a tragedy of the people of Kashmir. Mystics see it as retribution for sins committed by this Aryan race professing Islam. Many attribute it to the egocentricity of Kashmir leaders. Some believe that it is inherent in Kashmir psyche to be led by their enemy- posing - friends. Whatever the reason for discord amongst the Kashmir leaders leading struggle for ending uncertainty, fact of the matter is that people of the state have suffered immensely because of its own leaders. Some harmed this struggle more than those inimical to it.

The struggle for freedom in Jammu and Kashmir started in 1922. But it took an organized shape with the birth of Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1931. Birth of the Muslim Conference was an extra-ordinary event. It was for the first time that the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir united under one banner. This organization attracted the attention of Muslim intelligentsia all over the sub-continent and its support base widened and it went beyond the State- then known as country. It got a tremendous response and support from the Muslim press in Punjab. Lahore became a bastion of Kashmir struggle. To muster support for Kashmir struggle for freedom Muslim intellectuals of Punjab (majority of Kashmir origin) under the leadership of Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal constituted a Kashmir Committee. It was because of the hard labour put in by this Committee that processions and demonstrations all over the Sub-Conti-

nent took place in support of Kashmir Freedom Struggle and against the mayhem of July 13, 1931. All India support for the struggle changed the attitude of the British Empire towards the State and it started building pressure against the rulers to introduce some reforms in the State.

Birth of this formidable organization did not augur well with the feudal rulers and some elite Kashmiri Pandits. The Kashmiri Pandits who ruled the roost felt threatened at the awakening in the majority community, which mostly comprised an exploited lot of peasantry and workers. Maharaja Hari Singh became restless and wanted to sabotage it in the beginning. He in collaboration with Kashmiri Pandits started weaving conspiracies against the Muslim Conference. It was hardly one year after the birth of this organization that cracks started appearing in this fortress which was yet to solidify in a block. Mirwaiz Maulvi Mohammad Yousaf Shah, who had played a key role in the launching of this organization bade adieu to this organization and launched a new organization "Azad Muslim Conference". What prompted him to launch a new organization is a matter of debate. Mirwaiz's supporters state that the movement had come under the influence of Ahemdiya, as the Kashmir Committee Lahore was headed by Mirza Mehmood so Mirwaiz for his religious position could not work with the people who challenged finality of Prophethood. Sheikh Abdullah's supporters blamed him of having divided the Muslims at the behest of Maharaja Hari Singh against a cash award and some concessions. Whatever, the reason this division at the take off stage of the freedom struggle had a devastating impact. It fractured Kashmir Muslim society. Instead of fighting the feudal rulers, the Muslims particularly in Srinagar city started fighting with one another. This division sent shockwaves to Kashmir Committee in Lahore. Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, who had played pioneering role in waking up Kashmiris from deep slumber, was deeply pained at the infighting amongst the Kashmiri Muslim. He wanted to visit Kashmir to forge a unity among them. He applied for permission but was not allowed. It was on his behest that intellectuals like Munishi Siraj-u-Din, Prof. Alimud-Din and Mohammad Din Fauq visited Kashmir to bring a rapprochement between Sheikh Abdullah and the Mirwaiz. But the efforts of the Punjab Muslim intelligentsia failed to unite the two factions of the Muslim Conference. The Muslim Conference, under the leadership of Choudary Ghulam Abbas went from strength to strength and the Azad Muslim Conference died with a whimper.

In mid-thirties Sheikh Abdullah under the influence of some Kashmiri

Pandits slipped into the Congress lap. His meeting with Jawaharlal Nehru at Lahore and then travelling with him to North West Frontier province metamorphosed Sheikh Abdullah's thinking resulting in yet another division in Muslim Conference. Sheikh Abdullah launched the National Conference. In fact this organization was an extension counter of All India National Congress. The Muslim Conference was almost reduced to a skeleton and it was only after 1940 that this organization was revived. The Muslim Conference and the National Conference supporters instead of fighting the Dogra ruler fought amongst themselves. Division amongst Kashmir Muslims became a cause of concern for Qaid Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. In spite of the fact that Pakistan being in incubator and his presence being required in Delhi. The Quaid insisted Kashmir with the sole intention of forging unity among Kashmiri leaders. On May 8, 1944 he arrived in Jammu via Sialkot and all along from Jammu to Srinagar he was greeted by surging crowds. On May 10, 1944 he was accorded a grand reception both by the National Conference and the Muslim Conference. Qaid advised the Sheikh against toeing the Congress line. He told him that his hair had not turned grey in sun; it was out of experience with the Congress that he was suggesting him to be out of their dragnet. The sheikh, towards end of his life, admitted it to the Indian Express Correspondent that 'he had regrets of not having acted on Jinnah Sahib's advice.' True, Qaid-I-Azam could not forge unity between the National Conference and the Muslim Conference but it had catastrophic impact on the National Conference. The Muslim Conference which had a strong base in Jammu struck firm roots in Kashmir valley also and this frustrated the Sheikh and he started indulging in disgraceful acts. Qaid Azam left on July 25, 1944. His one and a half month stay in Kashmir had sent disturbing signals to the leaders of The All India Congress Committee. Congress leaders' deputed communist ideologues in hordes to Srinagar. It were the Communists who tried to give a new content to the National Conference politics and coined the slogan of 'quit Kashmir'. To offset the influence of Mohammad Ali Jinnah from Kashmir Politics, the Maharaja was advised by the Congress leaders to arrest the Muslim Conference leaders. The arrest of entire Muslim Conference cadre had an adverse effect on the Freedom Movement. The organization got weakened once again after the Mirwaiz Mohammad Yousaf Shah fought over the appointment of Choudary Hamidullah as an acting President of the Muslim Conference. Had not the leaders of the Muslim Conference and the National Confer-

ence engaged themselves in strife or had not Mirwaiz objected to the appointment of Choudary Hamidullah as President of the Muslim Conference, the situation would have been different and perhaps the Kashmir dispute would not have taken birth.

In 1964, the Holy Relic Movement brought unprecedented unity amongst the Muslims of the State. But this unity was of short duration. It ended with the release of Sheikh Abdullah. The supporters of the Mirwaiz and the Sheikh again clashed. This division among Kashmir Muslim became the cause of concern for Pakistan President, General Mohammad Ayoub Khan. He immediately deputed a senior officer of Pakistan Information Service, Aga Showkat Ali to Kashmir. Aga Showkat Ali, once General Secretary of the Muslim Conference, after conveying General Ayoub's message to these leaders was successful in ending the feud between the two parties.

Schism has again taken a toll of the Kashmir movement. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference which during the past one decade had emerged as a representative body of people of the State aspiring for the cause of right to self-determination got divided on the question of talking to the Indian leaders with or without Pakistan. Ostensibly, this does not seem a big question that could not have been addressed and resolved amicably. It is not an ideological divide. The difference is only over the methods of achieving goal. It will be too early to blame either of the two factions of betraying the cause. Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat in a public meeting stated that his faction had a nod from President Musharraf of Pakistan for talking to the Indian Home Minister. This was denied by Pakistan. Some Hurriyat leaders claim support of the USA for talking to India. While as leader of other faction Syed Ali Shah Geelani is apprehensive of the dialogue with New Delhi in isolation of Pakistan's involvement leading to yet another accord as that of 1975, between Sheikh Abdullah and Mrs. Gandhi. The gap between two groups is not unbridgeable. It is appreciable that President of Bar Association, Mian Abdul Qayoom has undertaken the mission of forging unity in the Hurriyat Conference. There is a need to intensify the efforts for bringing unity between the two factions of the Hurriyat Conference.

The leaders of the Hurriyat Conference owe a responsibility towards the people of this unfortunate land, they need to analyse dispassionately the diverse strategies adopted by them for reaching to the cherished goal and work out a common strategy with out bringing the state to the brink of catastrophe.

HURRIYAT DIVIDES

It seems that the Pakistan President General Musharraf's advice to Hurriyat leaders during their separate meetings with him had its impact. There are indications that the main leaders in the two factions are in a mood to unite. The suggestions made by Syed Ali Shah Geelani to constitute coordination committee for working out modalities for reunification is seen as a positive development. The septuagenarian Hurriyat leader who has no confusion about the future of the Jammu and Kashmir and believes in 'accession of the state to Pakistan' had part ways with then Maulvi Abbas led Hurriyat Conference for not playing pro-active role in the boycott call of 2002 Assembly Elections and one of its constituents, the Peoples Conference fielding proxy candidates. In the bizarre Kashmir politics Syed Ali Shah Geelani was left almost alone in his parent organization Jamat-e-Islami. It also distanced itself from his ideas on the question of accession and not 'accommodating himself what are termed as moderate views propounded the former Jamat-e-Islamia Chief Ghulam Mohammad Bhat and propagated by the present chief of the organization Nazir Ahmed Kashani. True, a single sparrow could not make spring; but Geelani was soon joined by some prominent leaders like Sheikh Abdul Aziz, second wrung leadership of the erstwhile Hurriyat Constituents. But it seemed incomplete without leaders who were not constituents of the Hurriyat Conference (Abbas). To bring Syed Ali Shah Geelani and these leaders together President of Kashmir Bar Association Mian Abdul Qayoom played a pro-active role but could not make much headway. He also worked for bringing Mirwaiz Farooq and Geelani together. Why Mian Qayoom failed? To understand this phenomenon there is a need to take a leap into the past

history of the organization known as the Hurriyat Conference (now truncated).

It was in December 1993, I went to see a friend of mine at the India International Centre, New Delhi. On my entering the restaurant of the Centre a Kashmiri journalist working for the Hindustan Times, who was sitting having coffee with two other persons, one, wearing Khadi and other raw-silk kurta and white Pyjama invited me to his table. I joined the three; the journalist friend introduced me to two other persons; one as Mr. Sharama, General Secretary BJP in-charge Jammu and Kashmir and the another as Mr. O.P. Shah an intellectual. Mr. O.P. Shah I was informed, is an interlocutor between New Delhi and Kashmir leadership. Whenever two Kashmiris sit together the discussions always boils down to Kashmir problem and ends up groping in darkness. Quite contrary to the image of BJP leaders, I found dwarf BJP General Secretary quite open minded and pragmatic. Mr. Shah had returned just a few days back from Srinagar after meeting the leaders of the Hurriyat Conference. During the discussions Mr. Shah revealed that the Hurriyat Conference suffered a terrific dichotomy. During one to one meeting they talk different than what they talk when you meet them collectively. In their individual meetings they are highly apologetic about the happenings in the State and are also highly enthusiastic to play to the New Delhi galleries about their being very flexible and moderate and when you meet them collectively they are quite opposite. He also made a very bold assertion that individually every one of them is eager to head the state government but collectively they always talk about the Right to Self Determination for People of the State, United Nations Resolutions on Kashmir, holding of a referendum in the state and holding of the tripartite talks to find a negotiated settlement of Kashmir problem. I dismissed the assertions made by Mr. O.P. Shah as nothing but chicanery and a part of New Delhi's machinations of using 'character assassination' as a tool to discredit Kashmir leadership and torpedo the ongoing "movement".

Sometime later, on a Sunday, a journalist friend of mine invited me over lunch in the Foreigners Press Club on Prana Quila Road. He introduced me to another senior most New Delhi based journalist working for an important international agency. The senior journalist almost hijacked the discussion. He was highly caustic and pungent about Kashmir leadership, he did not only oppose their lavish style of living, accumulating wealth and building properties but was quite revealing when he asked me

a cryptic questions as to who was paying bills of the Hurriyat leaders in Delhi— I was as ignorant about the funding of the Hurriyat Conference as any ordinary Kashmiri. It is none but the Government of India agencies. Naming a cleric-politician of the State he said that every penny that he incurs during his stay in Delhi is borne by one or the other agency. True to Kashmiri character of doubting intentions of any one criticizing our leaders, I dismissed the information as motivated. But, it set me thinking. A few days later I had an opportunity of meeting late Abdul Ghani Lone in New Delhi-Srinagar flight. I shared what Mr. O.P. Shah had told me at the India International Centre. Lone unlike me did not dismiss it but made it a point to place the matter before the Hurriyat Executive which resolved that no leader shall be having any meeting with any of the New Delhi interlocutors or diplomats individually.

Hurriyat Conglomerate undoubtedly was a thorn in the neck of New Delhi establishment. It had emerged as political voice of the State not in India only but also at the international level. On its calculus initially New Delhi looked at the birth of the Hurriyat as a positive sign for containing insurgency in the state but the tidal waves of militancy were so powerful and swift that they swept away most of the Hurriyat leaders from their traditional moorings and made them sing songs in symphony with the militants. The conglomerate was not only extending credibility to the militant activities but creating problems for New Delhi at the international level. Bulldozing this conglomerate was seen as the only option by New Delhi to contain Kashmir situation.

How to achieve this was the key question. It did not want to do it through intimidation and terror only. It devised a multi-pronged approach to the problem. The task was very discreetly handed over to Centre for Policy Research (CPR) which appointed six prominent intellectuals drawn from different disciplines. These intellectuals visited Srinagar very frequently and held meetings with the conglomerate leadership individually and collectively. It also carried out some studies to identify the strong and weak points of the conglomerate leadership. Except one or two leaders in the conglomerate it identified the following weak points in majority of them, one suffering from avarice; two, craving for comforts; three, having lot of lust for building property; five, concern about securing future of their children; six, having taste for luxurious cars; having lavish style of living; nine, being half-heartedly in the movement, ten, are in search of an opportunity to wriggle out of the situation, eleven, not recognizing each

others authority and twelve, but for support from Pakistan would have joined ranks of other pro-India politicians. The weaknesses thus identified provided a roadmap to New Delhi to demolish the conglomerate. As would have any other State engaged in countering insurgency done. It engaged many an agencies which included bureaucrats, intelligence officers and human rights activist to achieve the goal. New Delhi opened coffers for the children of some of the members of the Hurriyat Conference and awarded contracts for government supplies to some of them and succeeded to a large extent in truncating this conglomerate and ultimately one senior officer from New Delhi brought many of them round and prompted them to very tacitly supporting the 2002 elections resulting in truncation of the Hurriyat.

Now General Musharraf having taken the role of Quaid-e-Azam in 1942 to unite Kashmir leaders or General Ayub Khan in 1964 the question arises if the General's efforts will play any role in bringing particularly Hurriyat leaders i.e. Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Mirwaiz Farooq, Mohammad Yaseen Malik and Shabir Shah together. It is a big jigsaw puzzle. In greater interests of unification Hurriyat leaders of no consequences who have built mansions, amassed lot of wealth and purchased huge properties could be ignored and kept out of the ambit of the new dispensation, that is likely to emerge.

All about a Kindergarten class.

It was like kindergarten pupils meeting with their class teacher on the first day of the school. On seeing blank and innocent faces of All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders on May 3, 2006 the teacher in Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was reborn. He thought of giving some homework to his new pupils. He asked some candid questions like "what do you understand by self-governance and demilitarization"? Sir, we do not know, was the unanimous and instantaneous reply from the team. The naughty amongst them asked, "Sir, what do you understand by self-governance"? Rapt came the answer from the economist prime minister of India; "To me it is simple Abraham Lincoln's definition: 'governance of the people, for the people by the people'". The prime minister's team with askance looks eagerly awaited the chairman of the conglomerate unfolding his much talked about roadmap. To their dismay, no roadmap for resolution of the 'vexed' Kashmir problem was unrolled before them.

I am not sardonic, sarcastic or caustic but it is a harsh reality that the all APHC had not drafted any formal agenda for discussing with Prime Minister of India. It had reached New Delhi with mishmash of ideas, not even knowing where to start from. Notwithstanding meeting, finding space as lead story in majority of India and Pakistan papers, it was much ado about nothing. Did the news item deserve such a treatment? The editors are the best judges but fact of the matter is that it boiled down to one simple sentence, 'come next time with mechanism for holding the dialogue'. Many in New Delhi and Islamabad looked eagerly for the outcome of the meeting. A New Delhi journalist commented "yes, and the spin sounded good. Yes, I also believe that It did sound good but it sets one

pondering If the Hurriyat leaders with due deference to them all have evolved a structure for holding a dialogue with Indian leadership. I believe not, and then the Prime Minister would not have asked them to 'come next time with a mechanism albeit a structure for dialogue'. The question arises; has the Hurriyat Conference decided on a starting point for the dialogue with New Delhi or it is just marking time and waiting for what will come out of dialogue between the two countries. Asking the APHC (Mirwaiz) to come up next time with 'mechanism for dialogue' is nothing but another name for procrastination. The only out put of the dialogue between New Delhi and APHC on all the tracts, one, two and three has been the changed phraseology of the organization. The Mirwaiz now calls himself a 'separatist' instead of 'freedom fighter'; he prefers to call 'combatants' as 'militants' and not 'mujahid's', he avoids those consumed by violence in Kashmir as martyrs instead of calling them 'victims of violence'. The question is; that does phraseology matter, yes it matters- it holds a mirror to the mind. I am reminded that once Quad-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah in a meeting addressed Mahatma Gandhi as Mr. Gandhi and dropped the word Mahatma from his name. It attracted headlines and volumes of analysis. The changed phraseology of Mirwaiz does provide a lead to the changed mind of the organization but not substantially.

The chat at New Delhi had aroused curiosity in media, I think beyond proportion. An international news magazine doing a story on the latest situation in Kashmir wanted to know from me as what the latest chat in New Delhi meant to an ordinary Kashmiri when the death toll in the state continued to remain unchanged. The question is did it mean much or did it mean nothing at all, I posed this question to myself. But like many other ordinary Kashmiri not born with silver spoon in mouth I was lost in the maze of questions after questions one leading to another with out any reply. I concluded it meant nothing to a common Kashmiri. Many people including some of the Hurriyat leaders blame me of having a conservative understanding of Kashmir problem. They strongly believe that after September 11, the international politics has radically changed and majority of the resistance movements have lost their relevance. A top Hurriyat leader at a condolence meeting delivered a sermon to me for forty five minutes for being pragmatic and understanding dynamics of the ongoing dialogue between his faction of the Hurriyat Conference and New Delhi. The sermon was not serotonin but in bits sardonic as the leader believed that my ideas about Kashmir problem were hackneyed. Not only Pro-accession

leader in Kashmir Dr. Farooq Abdullah but also some Hurriyat leaders told me that they knew how world had changed after 9/11 as they were traveling frequently and how the scope of resolution of Kashmir had got confined to accepting status quo as the only solution. Notwithstanding the impression that Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq and Dr. Farooq Abdullah the two globe-trotter- politicians of the state have got about the scope of the resistance movements in the world in obtaining international political scenario, I very strong believe that the 9/11 euphoria is a passing out phase. It is going to die with a whimper. I also believe that unipolar world is short lived. Asia in future with India and China rising as global economic powers will have greater say in international affairs than the West. The United States has already smelled whiff in the air that its hegemony in the international affairs is on the wane. It also believes that the mild mannered Chinese leader Hu Jintao poses a great 'challenge to America's vision for the wider world. The Pentagon Quadrennial Defense Review released in February identified China as potential threat to the US'. China is fast embarking on the tract of emerging as a global power. As very aptly stated by an American journal Newsweek that 'even Washington's perspective is that many countries are increasingly more comfortable with China's morally neutral approach, even in Europe.' The United States in fact has already recognized China as a power and what worries experts like Micheal Green, former Asia Specialist on the US National Security Council is that relation between China and US should not turn into a cold war confrontation. Kashmir leaders need to understand the changes that are taking place at the international level and reshape their ideas.

There is nothing wrong in holding a dialogue with New Delhi provided there is a transparent agenda- an agenda with a public mandate. Much before starting a dialogue the leaders have to come out of the fret that kindergarten child generally suffers from on the first day of their class when they look at their teacher as phantasmagoria. Hurriyat Conference leaders particularly Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq and Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat shall have to exorcise the 9/11 genie from their minds. Kashmir problem is in no way connected with 9/11 happenings. It is as old as India and Pakistan are Independent nations.

It is naïve to think that Kashmir problem has its roots in sub-nationalism or nationalism. Majority of Kashmir experts, historians and scholars at the international level agree that the dispute in strict sense is a fall out of the ideology that divided the Indian sub-Continent. And looking for a

solution outside this ideology will be betraying history. India leadership right from Nehru to Vajpayee have aspired for the resolution of Kashmir problem. But what prevents them are the premonitions about the fallout of the solution which it believes would be fortifying the ideology that prompted carving out of a separate Muslim State in the South Asian region further. Dialogue between India and Pakistan about the resolution of Kashmir or its settlement is a part of history of Kashmir. But a dialogue with the leadership that has been espousing the cause of right to self-determination is a new phenomenon that needs to be watched very carefully and with all political agility. Let me borrow a phrase from Stephen Cohen which he used on India-Pakistan diplomatic relations in post 1971 war and described it as 'golden age of Indian diplomacy. With majority of Kashmir leadership synchronizing their chants with New Delhi, one can very easily call it as 'golden period of New Delhi's Kashmir policy'. The question that haunts all Kashmir watchers is whether dialogue between the APHC (Mirwaiz) and New Delhi grows beyond the standard of the 'kindergarten class' and matures into an opinion that would help India and Pakistan to hammer out an amicable solution. I believe we need wait and watch for reply to this question.

Dissension is the Strength

Two sides of the same coin. It is an innocuous phrase for describing two persons with common outlook or similarities in ideas. I toyed with an idea of calling Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq and Syed Ali Shah Geelani as two side of the same coin. The idea was not farfetched. Many things are common in the two leaders: both head All Parties Hurriyat Conferences; both are religious-cum-political leaders; both have their votaries and adversaries; both stand for right to self-determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir; in official dossiers both are described as "pro-Pak"- with only shade of difference within brackets, one described as 'moderate' another as 'hardliner'. Of the two who could be described as the head and who the tail was mind boggling. I would not run the risk of annoying one at the cost of another. True, if a bar chart is drawn about the imprisonments and confinements suffered by the two leaders, the Geelani bar touches the peaks and the Mirwaiz bar is at the crest. Comparing only two also involves a risk which I did not want to run. There are as many as six of them on the same turf believing that they are all equal players. Every one of them believes that he is the real champion of the game. I thought of comparing them to a dice. True dice has six sides but allotting them sides on the dice was again a problem as it has one to six spots indicating scoring of points. Of the six leaders who could be allotted side with more dots and who with less dots was again a big question. To avoid running the risk of earning their annoyance and even wrath I thought of devising a new coloured dice with equal points on all sides but with varying shades indicating their commitment to the "cause".

The inspiration for my playing with phrases and words in comparing

contemporary leaders was the story about the debate organized by Kashmir Civil Society and treatment given to the story by the news desk editor. The editor made all out endeavours to give equal weight to the two leaders who had spoken at the debate. The two leaders were the two chairmen of the two factions of Hurriyat Conferences twin brothers separated after seven years of their birth. The story made me to rethink; what divides the two leaders? Is it the suffixes of 'moderate and who a hard-liner' tagged to them by the government and media that divides them or there is something beyond this. It is equally mind boggling who could be called a moderate and a hardliner? Is there a dividing line between the two words? As I could make out from the newspaper story both the leaders believe that the right to self-determination is inalienable and this right had accrued to the people of Jammu and Kashmir through various resolutions passed by the United Nations. Both the leaders believe that this right is yet to be exercised by the people of the state; both the leaders believe that dialogue amongst the contenders was an important means of arriving at solution to the problem. Surprisingly there were many common lines in the talks delivered by the two leaders. One striking line that was common to both the leaders was that "India had occupied the Jammu and Kashmir and it should vacate it." If one takes out the rhetoric's from the statements made by these leaders and analysis this line only- what is moderate and what is hardliner in this statement in this line. This line provides a lead that there is unanimity of thought in these leaders. The two leaders recognize a common cause that propels and directs their politics. The question is; what divides them? Is it the personality clash, ego centrality or the approach to the problem that has divided the Kashmir leadership? Much before I dwell upon this question let me look at the history of sub-continent and cull out some words of wisdom from their that could perhaps enable these leaders to hammer out their difference or narrow them.

The second half of the twentieth century heralded the end of colonialism in the world. Many nations that were fighting for freedom won their battle and emerged as free nations. Of all the freedom struggles in the world the Indian Freedom Struggle is most classical in the sense that it was fought without much of bloodshed- and instead of one two independent nation states tumbled out of the struggle. I do not get surprised if our leaders ever had the opportunity reading Indian history or like the most towering of Kashmir leader Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah they are also book-haters.

There are many lessons in the Indian Freedom Struggle. One I believe is dissensions are strengths of such movement. Mahatma Gandhi was the most towering leader of the Congress. He had his own approach for leading the Indian Freedom Struggle. If one looks at the three pillars of the Congress, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patil there was a sea of difference in their outlooks, perceptions and understanding of the issue. Gandhi and Patil were wary of each other on many vital issues; Nehru and Patil have never looked at the issues through the same lenses. History is replete with stories of the two having harsh and hotter bouts on many issues of national importance. Gandhi and Subash Chander Bose were poles apart but all had one goal. Pleading for reading Congress leaders may be committing sin but if my leaders read the story about the birth of Pakistan they will definitely find many a gems of wisdom that could perhaps help them in overcoming the humps that have been preventing them from uniting. It is a historical reality that Quaid-e-Azam was disappointed at the second Round Table Conference. In the words of Dr. Javid Iqbal (Islam and Pakistan Identity), "In utter helplessness, he (Jinnah) could neither change Hindu mentality nor realize make Muslims realize their precarious positions. Despairingly he decided to give up politics and settle in England. This sense of gloom and doom disturbed Jinnah's mind for four years of his stay in England." There is no denying that Liaquat Ali Khan, who never became a member of Congress, was not in agreement with the Quaid on his efforts for ensuring common electorate and unity with the Congress and there existed a lot of dissension between the two leaders. In spite of disagreements on many important issues, it was Liaquat Ali Khan who, besides Dr. Iqbal pleaded before Quaid to end up his self-imposed exile and return to India. Liaquat Ali Khan made a fervent appeal to Quaid-e-Azam to return. In the words of historian Raj Mohan Gandhi, "Jinnah invited Liaquat Ali Khan and Ranna (Wife of Liaquat) home for dinner. They saw the quiet comfort of his life and Ranna 'felt that nothing could move him out of that security.'" Despite variability in their perceptions in dealing with Congress and leading the Muslim League it was Liaquat Ali Khan who persuaded him to return to India and lead the movement. The result of this persuasion is a history- Pakistan was born. Jinnah went into history as unparalleled leader who created a nation state out of nothing.

It is not the cock and bull story that I wanted to share with the leaders who spoke at the Civil Society function. But without being didac-

tic I wanted to tell them in dissensions lays the strength. There is nothing wrong in dissenting to achieve a noble goal. If Sardar Patil and Nehru could move together, If Liaquat Ali could plead and beseech before the Quaid- why cannot these leaders think in terms of living and leading together with all their dissensions. Then scribes like me will not fear of running a risk in comparing the two. There would be perhaps no need to think in terms of inventing a dice with equal points on all sides for drawing comparisons. If these leaders really believe that they are playing on a common turf let them invent a team spirit.

Two Nation Theory

Synonyms: Autonomy, Self-governance

It is a season of remakes. These days the buzzword in the Bollywood is 'remakes'. There is hardly a blockbuster of bygone days that has not caught the imagination of new filmmakers. More than creativity it is the belief that remaking blockbusters of yesteryears will fill their coffers. On Friday J.P. Dutta's *Umaro Jaan* – remake of Muzaffar Ali's blockbuster and a great classic was released all over India. Many more remakes are in queue, the mega hit *Sholay* is being remade by Ramgopal Verma with Amitabh Bachan being caste in the role of Gabar Singh. The role immortalized by Amjad Khan in G.P. Sippy's historical movie of the same name. All great films made in *Bombay Nagari* during the past fifty years are being remade without changing the storyline but with a new caste. How successful these remakes will be at the box office now depends upon how powerful the campaign is. The remake bug of the Bollywood has hit the political theatre of Kashmir as well – which I would prefer to call to *Kashawood*. – it has all ingredients of *film Nagari*, super stars, stars, actors and jokers.

Our politicians are best theatrical performers. Majority of our politicians are now engaged in re-performing the roles already performed by the senior actors whose theatrical performance had won them great applauses from the audience for more than five decades. They had chosen a storyline which they often tried to reinterpret by changing the dialogues. True- these performers like Abdullah Nomain- of "Shalimar the Clown"- have been great tricksters who, through their performance kept people of "that earthly paradise of peach orchards and honey bees, of mountains and lakes, of green eyed women and men: ruined paradise, not so much lost as

smashed" glued to them to the last and making them realize only after their death that they had been beguiled and seduced by these actors to the mountain for not returning like the great pied piper of Hamelin. Having realized that they were mesmerized by the earlier tricksters the question arises; can the new actors engaged in remaking the films like "the greater autonomy", "the self-governance", "rock salt- green Flag", and 'the pre-1953 position' and so on perform the roles with that deftness with which it was played by their predecessors and with their performance had held kept audience captive through the art of what is called as 'suspension of disbelief'.

Much before I come to the scope of the repeat performance of the new actors there is a need to have a fresh a look at the actual storyline. Looking at the storyline in the right historical perspective both warp and woof to original and remakes of films 'autonomy', 'self-governance', 'rock-salt and green flag' and 'pre-1953 position' is provided by the two nation theory and not by newly born discourse of Kashmiryat.

In six hundred year old recorded history of Kashmir The word "Kashmiryat" is not found anywhere in its lexicon. There is no mention of this word in the poetry of Lal Ded and Alamdar-e-Kashmir. It does not figure any where in our mystic poetry –supposed to be progenitor of this new born philosophy. It has not been used by Abdul Ahad Azad and Ghulam Ahmed Mehjoor and the word was not perhaps known even to the trinity of our progressive poets Dina Nath Nadim, Amin Kamil and Rehman Rehi- the word is of the most recent birth. It in fact crept in our dictionary in mid-nineties and found currency at the turn of the past century. This word and philosophy whatever you call had no role in the struggle of people of the state against the autocratic rule. The struggle when seen in the right perspective and with out a mindset was born out of the two nation theory much before the theory had been propounded by Quid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah supposed author of this philosophy in the sub-continent. As said by Dr. Chitralkha Zutshi, "In 1930, the rhetoric of belonging to a religious collectivity became inseparable from the discourse on right and freedoms that formed the core of emerging Kashmiri Muslim Movement- this was not a novel phenomenon on the political landscape of the valley. Since late nineteenth century, Kashmiri Muslim leaders had been attempting to internally reform and define the boundaries of their community while also demanding that the state recognizes them as separate entity." (Language of Belonging-page No 210). The

1931 movement in true sense was an uprising against communal attitude of the rulers and their being partisan towards the Muslim majority - it was not so called Kashmiryat- which is now being projected as a sub-nationalism that was behind the uprising against the autocratic rule of Dogra dynasty but as pointed out by the Barjor Dalal Committee appointed by the Maharaja Hari Singh to inquire into the causes of the disturbances in 1931, "It was a movement of Muslims against the Hindus of valley many of whom held positions of power within the government." The Committee report also observed that people had no grouse against the ruler but they were against "a section of Hindus having overpowering representation in the government and that section oppressed Mohammedans" (Dalal Report of Srinagar Riots page 45). Looking at the entire struggle against the feudal autocracy without tinted glasses predominately it has been a struggle against the Hindu domination during the autocratic rule. True, after 1939, a good chunk of the Muslim Conference leadership switched over to the nationalist politics and renamed their organization as the National Conference but if one looks both at the dynamics of politics of this organization and psyche of its leadership it has been covertly the two nation theory that propelled its politics- perhaps unconsciously. The National Conference overtly opposing the two nation theory of the Muslim League subscribed to this philosophy even after supporting accession of the State with the Indian Union.

The fear of Hindu domination which had become *raison d'être* for the 1931 uprising and birth of the Muslim Conference continued to be the determinant factor for its politics albeit sub-consciously. Notwithstanding its opposing joining Pakistan it was the lurking fear of 'domination' that made it to plead for a 'conditional' accession with India on three subjects only. It was this fear that found an expression in public outbursts of Sheikh Abdullah in 1952 resulting his deposition and detention on August 9, 1953. It was this fear that continued to dominate Sheikh Abdullah or the National Conference even after bidding adieu to the twenty two years struggle for right to self-determination and coming to power. Notwithstanding dancing to the organ pipe and drum of New Delhi the party has been pleading for autonomy of the state – which is nothing but asking for certain constitutional safeguards against the domination of majority community in India. Sheikh died without getting autonomy, his flamboyant son believing the slogan of autonomy would help him in perpetuating in power trumpeted it but ended up in a sort of wilderness or what I could call as political renunciation.

In tune with the craze for remakes- or perhaps drawing inspiration from Bollywood former Home Minister of India and Chief Minister Mufti Muhammad Syed has bade farewell to his earlier slogans of integrating the state within the Indian Union, removing immiscibility of Kashmiris and making them a part of the "national mainstream". He has been now raising the slogan of self-governance which as interpreted by him is nothing but autonomy- a slogan much trumpeted by the National Conference. Sheikh Abdullah was the protagonist of this slogan- which he interpreted as a means for total independence and it was this slogan or theatrical performance that made him super star. It is perhaps for his dream of becoming the super-star that the PDP leader has undertaken to re-launch 'drama' of autonomy on the political theatre of Kashmir. Will it be blockbuster or not is a different story. But the question arises; does the new actor understand that talking greater autonomy or self-governances was very subtly subscribing to the two nation theory- which in the sub-continent is seen as a political philosophy behind the birth of Pakistan.

WHERE ARE THEY?

Missing- I look for this advertisement in newspapers on daily basis but there is no advertisement about them. They are mysteriously missing from the political scene- . Majority of my leaders have what T.S. Eliot called 'etherized' or what many call vanished from scene. Where are they? I miss them! Their colorful pictures on front-page, page three and page nine of newspapers almost on daily basis had embossed their larger than life image on many minds including mine. Their mannerism and moods, some time captured by H. Naqash through lens of his camera would leave an indelible impression on my mind for weeks together. Their costumes; peasant cap covering forehead and one eyebrow, unbuttoned pheran-puffing cigarette or white turbans and knee touching cloaks would often compel me to read their statements and pseudo-statements. But has this whole brigade of All Parties Hurriyat Conference gone. Minus young globe-trotting chairman of the conglomerate gone into hibernation. I have not heard Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat, Maulana Mohammad Abbas Ansari and many others for months together. I loved Prof. Bhat's political euphuism. I knew there is not much of substance in his statement but even then I loved to read them or hear him. I loved Maulana Abbas's statement for their naivety- and derived pleasure in reading them for their hollowness. I have no grouse against Bilal Lone-. He has always been shy of media and like his firebrand and agile father he believes in grassroot politics and spends most of his time in Kupwara- fort of his father's politics. Majority of the leaders in APHC - "moderate" have not made any impact. They have not grown beyond hewers of wood and drawers of water of Kashmir politics. Notwithstanding their innumerable sacrifices-even commitment

to their cause they have failed to become cult figures of Kashmir politics and continue to tread on the track.

I am neither their ardent supporter nor follower, why should I miss them. The reason for this is that I always believed that leaders are torch-bearers who lead us through darkest alleys. This is what history has taught us. In all struggles it is the leaders who lead their people. They do not wait for opportunities but create situations that throws open opportunity- this is what Gandhi and Jinnah did. Mahatma Gandhi created situations for achieving his goal of 'swaraj' and Quaid Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah capitalized the situation and got nation-state. Every second man in the street these days says that this is most critical juncture of Kashmir politics, some believe we are on a threshold of change and some assert that we are about to enter into new phase. If it is true that the Kashmir problem is in its most critical stage then why have leaders of "movement" gone into hibernation. It is intriguing. Is it not?

One may blame leaders of yester-years of having taken wrong decisions at the right moments but one cannot blame them of having taken into reclusé at critical junctures of our politics. I remember the Holy Relic Movement of 1964. Most of the political leaders had either migrated to Azad Kashmir or where in jails. It was Maulana Mohammad Syed Masoodi with all his failings and inherent contradictions that came forward to lead this movement. Truth is that he was not obsessed with getting the top slot in politics but made all out endeavours to provide a second wrung leadership to Kashmir. He was always young political enthusiasts for sharing his ideas, palatable or not-palatable. He catapulted to the central stage of Kashmir young leaders from Mirwaiz Muhammad Farooq to Abdul Rashid Kabali. Who survived and who succumbed is a different story. Maulana guided this movement at every juncture- he would hold classes'- mammoth classes to make people understand the nuances of the politics and he would on daily basis identify the pit holes of the struggle to the people. Notwithstanding being a student of class seven, I vividly remember that he had invented slogan "*Hushar*"- this slogan was raised to make people conscious about the agent-provocateurs in their ranks. The explanation offered for this word is a fresh as morning dew in my mind. In his lucid style he explained to people that agent-provocateurs was like a *Shakari* who lays a net to catch birds and ties a bird in the middle of the net that attracts the other birds towards net by crying. I remember every lecture he delivered those days was a class. I do not know whether the Holy Relic

Where Are They?

Movement towards the end mishandled or not as is commonly believed- but as a child I remember he very subtly converted this movement into movement for right to self-determination which made Nehru to rethink about Kashmir resulting in the release of Sheikh Abdullah and other Plebiscite Front leaders. It was but for success of the movement that Nehru sent Sheikh Abdullah to Pakistan to meet Pakistan President Field Marshall General Muhammad Ayub Khan, - where division of the state along Chenab had emerged as one of the pragmatic solution. It was but for death of Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru that the process for resolution of Kashmir problem ended up.

In 1964, there was no confusion, there were only two streams of politics one believing in finality of accession with India leading to power another believing in question of accession yet to be decided leading to struggle and those espousing the cause of right to self-determination had no hazy ideas about their goal. Then there was no conflict between '*do-rasti*' and '*tesra-rista*'- it was a later development when traditional rivalry between Sheikh and Mirwaiz family was revived for preserving their political citadels. But today more than two dozen ideas from Ireland formula to self-governance are being mooted about Kashmir resolution but Kashmir leaders are as clueless about these formulas as man in the street.

It is only Syed Ali Shah Geelani right or wrong who has made his ideas known about the formulas for resolution of Kashmir that have been cascading into Kashmir politics for past five years. His stand is clear that there is no other formula than the one offered by United Nations and endorsed by India and Pakistan. So one does not expect him to enlighten us on the formulas for resolution of Kashmir suggested by various quarters. But one expects the leaders who have been blindly supporting formulas coming from Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf. True, there is none with greater political understanding in APHC whom one could compare even with Maulana Muhammad Syed Masoodi or politically astute Abdul Ghani Lone around but it should not be that difficult for them to share their ideas on concepts like 'self-governance' or 'Ireland formula' or 'Andorra type resolution for Kashmir problem with people of the state, who are the worst sufferers. If one believes the interpretation of a faction of Pradesh Congress recast into regional party that is more vociferous and vocal on self-rule it is nothing beyond jugglery of words. It simply means what the National Conference calls as restoring pre-1953 position for the state. The faction of the Hurriyat Conference that has been avowedly

supporting the formula of self-rule needs to come out of the hibernation and present their point of view before people if they want to stay in politics.

It will be wrong to believe that the "moderate or flexible" leaders are that novice that can not come out with their interpretation of self-rule. One can understand that it is in shock after its much trumpeted meeting with Indian Prime Minister failed to grow beyond photo-opportunity. It needs to come out of that shock lest it gets ruder shock by finding their name and pictures on the advertisement page of the newspapers amongst the missing.

Of Hemlock and Antidote

CANNIBAS—HEMLOCK; CANNIBAS—HEMLOCK—Cannabis — hemlock... On Tuesday morning my mind oscillated like a pendulum of an antique clock between these two words. It were proceedings of a seminar at a local hotel reported in newspapers that stirred the thought process and tossed my mind like a shuttlecock between these two words- names of two shrubs having almost similar leaves. These words sounded and resounded to me like those from the novels of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. They took me on a longer voyage on the highway of consciousness or what William James described as stream of consciousness, scene after scene, of pain, suffering and agony of people, betrayals, deceptions and deception of politicians started rolling before my eyes.

Notwithstanding science having redefined consciousness and memory- I believe consciousness is a crime it makes you think and rethink and bumps your mind persistently and teases it too frequently; tranquilizes only when you speak the truth. My friends often remind me that truth has no place in our society but I believe speaking truth helps in catharsis and purgation. So let me say what I feel.

I could understand word hemlock coming to my mind on reading this news report but why word cannabis tormented my mind is a big question. It was Syed Ali Shah Geelani referring about a statement made by Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat, 'scholar' leader of the Hurriyat Conference during an interview with a television channel about 'drinking poison' In his statement Prof. Bhat had stated, "In the given circumstances everybody has to drink poison and there is no other way." The statement coming from phi-

philosopher leader of the Hurriyat leader was not something unusual. He has been in habit making highly philosophic statements while referring to mundane political developments. Many times is better interpreted by old gossipers in down-town barber shops. His statement asking people to drink poison has perhaps come out of his belief that he was the Socrates of contemporary Kashmir politics. The word hemlock coming to mind after reading the news report was natural instantaneous reaction. But why word "cannabis" struck my mind on reading the statement is baffling and puzzling. Perhaps it was image of the scholar leader of the Hurriyat that has got embossed on my mind or his often published pictures in news papers holding a cigarette tightly in his fist a viva famous Pran of Indian Cinema in his heydays and his cap covering half-forehead in *Qadir Chahan's* or Bakshi Rashid style. Many times I would miss the picture for that of Jamal Goor puffing smoke and adding pleasant not so pleasant aroma to morning breeze in wee hours outside Kamal Sahib's *Taqi* in historic area of Shahampor- that once upon was the centre of great learning and hummed with the activities of Islamic scholars. I had heard Jamal Goor and many of his companions sitting outside or inside *Taqi's* making highly philosophic statement like 'poison is an elixir and elixir is poison', I never understood this philosophy- I was told these are mystical thoughts and children cannot understand them. I was told that those who consume derivatives from cannibals have a super-conscious level and they transcend cosmos. I do not know when Prof. Bhat stated that there was no way out other than taking poison for the people if he like Jamal Goor believed that poison was elixir and elixir was poison or it was Socrates in him that had prompted the statement. I wish it could be Socrates rather than Jamal Goor that had inspired the statement. Socrates consumed hemlock to stand by the side of the truth. On the other side poor Jamal Goor of my downtown preferred to remain in hallucination rather than facing challenges of life. I would never like my philosopher leader to be a Jamal Goor.

Looking at the statement made by Prof. Bhat and quoted by Syed Ali Shah Geelani outside the realm of philosophy and analyzing it on mundane plane of politics it sounds like declaration of surrender. It points towards the coming political events in the state and future course of action for All Parties Hurriyat Conference, recognized both by India and Pakistan establishments. It perhaps was announcement for yet another accord with New Delhi.

Notwithstanding the statement making my thoughts oscillate between words "hemlock" and "cannabis", it took me down the memory lane. The statement sounded like a refrain that I had heard earlier also. Some one else had also told people that even if it is bitter they will have to drink this poison- *Yeh Zahar Ka Payla Peena Hoga*. This sentences in roaring voice once again echoed for me. It was Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah who had made a similar statement in mid-seventies much before his lieutenant Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg had started talking to Mrs. Gandhi's envoy G. Parthasarthy. It was much before he had asked us to unlearn the lessons that he had drilled in our tender minds for twenty two years. It was much before we were told that twenty two years struggle for right to self-determination was wilderness. It was much before we were told that those who raised the slogans like 'we want plebiscite' and 'our demand plebiscite' in lanes and by lanes of Srinagar, Islamabad and Sapore were lunatic fringes. It was much before that we were made to relearn the lessons that our battle with New Delhi was not 'over accession but quantum of accession'.

In mid-seventies the "poison sentence" had become part of Abdullah's trade-mark-refrain, like his famous "*tau*" which punctured his speeches. Sheikh Abdullah unlike contemporary leadership had a strong supporter base that believed in swimming and sinking with him. It was this cadre that interpreted his "poison sentence" as heralding of yet another phase of our 'struggle'. But the interpretations given by his supporters were not supported by the statements made by him and his man Friday. They starkly suggested that the duo and not his rank and file wanted to retrace their steps. Many blame Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for having set in rethinking in these leaders by stopping what was then termed as "PL480" (aid) for running of Plebiscite Front, politicians like Maulana Muhammad Syed Masoodi attributed Sheikh's retracing steps to his nervousness in the wake of dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971 and New Delhi capitalizing on his nervousness and getting him round. Some attributed falling of curtains on the Plebiscite Front to Sheikh having given up under family pressure for leading a more prosperous and luxurious life. The then younger generation in colleges and universities saw more than it met to eye in the "poison sentence" and protested, held demonstration. But their saner voices where lost in the din of the Abdullah supporters.

To understand the import of sentence "*Zahar Kaya Payala*" in the light of statements made by Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg, a group of

students (including me) from Kashmir University at the behest and advice of Sufi Muhammad Akbar called on Sheikh Abdullah at his residence. The Sheikh who for his dominantly fascist nature was never ready to accept other opinion was not ready to talk to us on politics but it was perhaps for our hanging around in his lawns that he came out and vowed in his typical style that he was not betraying the cause but had only changed the strategy. Honestly we believed his statement as a biblical truth. Never knowing the strategy was targeted at resumption of power and it never crossed our mind that the logical conclusion of the changed strategy would be 1975 Indira-Sheikh Accord.

When I read the same sentence after thirty three years- I was convinced that we are once again coming to the square one and I construed that another Accord was on anvil only this time signatories will be different.

What is most puzzling and equally conspiring why our leaders have been only talking about administering poison to people and not elixir and why cannot they think of potent antidotes that could cure the old poison that continues to run through the veins of our body politics since decades.

Where Quaid-i-Azam Failed

Scores of them are born. Their numbers swell with every passing year. Countless! There is a rash of political outfits across the Zero Bridge in the Posh Raj Bagh area of Srinagar city. After every fifty meters there is an office of a political outfit. Scores of 3x10 feet billboards dominate the skyline in the area. Names of some of these outfits sound funny- holding mirror to the people heading them. Pictures of Mohammad Maqbool Bhat, the first Kashmiri who was put to gallows after the departure of British Subcontinent adorn the walls of many offices of these political outfits. Billboards of many outfits carry badly scrawled pictures of the slain leaders. Some signboards have green flags with white crescent in the middle scribbled on sides. Pictures of some of the slain combatant leaders and human rights activists decorate walls of the rooms of the leaders of these outfits. Majority of them claim to be the real heirs of the sacrifices made by the 'combatant' leaders whose gravesites are now forgotten outlandish places.

A marked difference is observed in the offices of these political outfits and the offices of the political organizations of fifties and sixties. No pictures of Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Dr. Allama Mohammad Iqbal now adorn the walls of the political parties in the State. Not even in the offices of the political parties that avowedly support the accession of the State to Pakistan. One finds smoky and dusty pictures of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru adorning walls of some of the political parties supporting accession of the state the Indian Union. The number of pro-India political outfits in Kashmir is far lesser than the political outfits claiming to be the supporters of 'total independence' or 'right to self-determination

for the people. True in the wake of 1996 election there was mushrooming of pro-India political outfits. Every second "renegade" or "surrendered militant" launched a political outfit with support from one or the other agency. Many 'fugitives' settled in Delhi surfaced in 1996 and launched a political outfit. There is hardly any "national" or "regional" political party that did not field a candidate or two in these elections. Token presence in 1996 elections was seen as status symbols by most of them. Majority of these outfits were provided offices by the government in the security zones and some were allowed to establish offices in government buildings like the Institute of Management. The 1996 election was a jamboree exercise which 'filled coffers of many an individuals'. It was a bumper lottery for majority of them.. These outfits faded into oblivion like the horns of stag during winters after the elections were over. Compared to pro-India outfits the number of outfits claiming to be 'supporters' of 'Azadi' or "right to self-determination has been multiplying. It is like a chain of chemical reactions one leading to another. Many a detained "combatant" leaders after release from jails, instead of joining existing organizations launched their own outfits- a one man show. True, this is not new phenomenon in Kashmir. In those olden days when Sheikh Abdullah and Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg were in the vanguard of the right to self-determination movement. The number of youth organizations mushroomed in Kashmir. There were as many as four factions of the Young Men's League, the Alfata group fragmented into three major groups, one naming itself as Inqalabi Mahaz, another as the Peoples League and third as Students Islamic Organization. But what is intriguing is the fragmentation of the major political players in the 'right to self-determination' movement in the state.

There can be no denying that Kashmir issue which was almost dead after the fall of Dacca in 1971 was reborn in 1990, after some teenagers took to guns and earned international headlines. There was an urge in a section of political leadership espousing the cause of right to self-determination to consolidate the political gains that, according to them, had accrued out of what they termed as the "armed struggle". It is not much of consequences whether the formation of the conglomerate of political parties was a brain child of some US Diasporas or it was a the result of marathon confabulation of the political leaders detained in the Mandi guest house or it was Islamabad that worked for forging a joint political front in the state. It would be naïve to dismiss the role played by the Government of

India in bringing Kashmir leaders together and encouraging them to form a joint stage. The government of India facilitated a dialogue amongst the political leaders of Kashmir by bringing them together in a guesthouse in the outskirts of New Delhi. In Government of India's estimation it would have been comfortable to talk to Kashmir political leadership if it was brought under one tent.

The birth of All Parties Hurriyat Conference was an important watershed in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. Seen in retrospect Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone was the moving spirit behind the birth of All Parties Hurriyat Conference. He and Syed Ali Shah Geelani in my estimation, despite their yawning ideological gaps, played a pro-active role in holding the conglomerate together. Without counting the achievements and failures of this conglomerate it did emerge as 'political' face of Kashmir struggle. But no sooner did the opportunities for playing a greater role for this organization brightened then it got fragmented into as many as five outfits.

It is a jigsaw puzzle. What prompted division in the conglomerate. Many assert (out of fashion) that it was 'hidden hand' – an obvious reference to New Delhi played a dubious role in dividing this organization. Many blame some human rights activists from New Delhi frequenting the State working as catalysts for the division by inflating the egos of some leaders and making them believe that they were getting dwarfed by remaining in the conglomerate. Many blame the temperamental incompatibility in various leaders for the division. The political mitosis did not end up with the Hurriyat Conference dividing into two equal halves. But it got fragmented into five groups. The matter did not end up there only. The constituents of the Hurriyat also got fragmented. The Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference of Abdul Ghani Lone got fragmented into four outfits- Sajad group, Bilal group, Hubbi group and Gulzar group. The Muslim Conference got divided into two one headed by Prof. Ghani Bhat and another by Sumji, a Jammu and Kashmir Liberation got divided into two major groups and so on and so forth. In the wake of these developments the Jammāt-e-Islami almost took a political recluse. True, there was no vertical divide in this organization but on political ideology this organization is divided. Majority of its office bearers are remorseful for having part of militancy-they now shudder at word "Jihad".

Can this divided lot be put together? Some individual efforts were made by people to forge unity in Kashmir leaders but failed. There seems no optimism about these leaders ever coming together. I firmly believe that

'schism and Kashmir are born for each other'. I am not wrong. Story of Kashmir struggle from 1931 has been of mitosis. History of Kashmir struggle since 1931 is of division and division. No lesser than people like Dr. Mohammad Iqbal made all out endeavours to bring unity amongst Kashmir leaders but failed. In 1938, the tallest of twentieth century leaders Quaid-i- Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah about whom great British historian Stanly Wolpert said, "Few individuals significantly alter the course of history. Fewer modify the map of the world. Hardly any one can be credited with creating a nation-state. Mohammad Ali Jinnah did all the three", also failed to forge unity in Kashmir leaders in forties. Why did Dr. Mohammad Iqbal and Mohammad Ali Jinnah fail to forge unity amongst Kashmir leaders may be a matter of research for the students of contemporary history. But I believe It should be subject for psycho-analysts rather than historians to analysis how two Kashmir leaders can move together and struggle for attaining their political goals.- let me be frank enough I am not optimistic-Kashmir leaders will never unite...

OF MISSING NUTS AND BOLTS

Time is ticking. Ticking fast. The Second Round Table Conference between New Delhi and Kashmir leaders announced by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is round the corner. Just three days left. But there is a lot of haze and mist surrounding it. Many a question haunts the public mind about this conference. Will the conference end up with a whimper or a bang? Majority of people believe that the conference will not be of much consequence as far as it is attended by political parties believing in the finality of the accession of the state with the Indian union or those of the leaders who aspire for greater autonomy within the Indian union. It will perhaps make some difference if leaders and people espousing the cause of right to self-determination participate in the conference.

The Central Agencies in the State and the State Government machinery are on toes, if not to make the conference a grand success but at least to make it look successful. They are working like Trojans- using all slings and arrows in their quiver to see a greater participation in the conference. Notwithstanding more than 47 political parties, teachers and journalists (how credible let me not comment) participating in the first round table conference held in the month of February at New Delhi, did not send even the slightest breeze across the Pirpanjal to soothe the much worked up mind of ordinary Kashmiri. Less said about this meeting, the better. Should one describe it a flop, failure, half-success or an exercise in futility or what else? But it did send a shockwave down the spine of the APHC led by Mirwaiz that in New Delhi's estimation the conglomerate was not heavier than many other one or two-men-political outfits having their offices across the Zero Bridge.

To save the second conference from meeting its Waterloo the government agencies are making all out endeavors to woo as many as possible the pro-right to self determination parties to the conference. But yet there seem no ostensible takers. The stand of the Hurriyat Conference (G) is known that it will not be participating in any such meetings where resolution of Kashmir in accordance with the United Resolutions is not to be debated or discussed. The attitude of JKLF headed by Mohammad Yasin Malik and Democratic Freedom Party headed by Shabir Shah is flexible as compared to the APHC (G), they want the meeting to be broad based. What "broad based" means continue to be shrouded in mystery. Does it mean involving the leaders of Azad Kashmir, Northern Areas, and United Jihad Council in the dialogue process or something less or more? But the APHC led by *Maulvi* Sahib suffers prince of Denmark syndrome: 'To be or not to be: that is the question.' It wants to participate and it does not. The question is; why should the APHC led by Mirwaiz suffer from a dilemma on the question of sharing table with the National Conference, the Pradesh Congress, the Peoples Democratic Party and hordes of other outfits with the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, when it 'had already consented for' it. It is not the sitting along with Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Umar Abdullah, Mufti Syed, Mehbooba Mufti, Ghulam Nabi Azad or some Pandit teachers that worries Mirwaiz Farooq. He is more comfortable with them than with Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Mohammad Ashraf Sahari, Shabir Shah or Yasin Malik. But what worries him is 'lack of skill for participation in such a conference' or if he is not outwitted at such a conference. If the Asian Age story filled by Jameel is to be believed New Delhi has already decided to hold a separate meeting with parties believing in finality of accession and those believing it yet to be decided, then the contours of meeting may perhaps change.

The APHC (Mirwaiz) having dropped the "exercise of right to self determination as being an edifice for resolution of the Kashmir problem" as its agenda for discussions with New Delhi, it is a million dollar question if the conglomerate has evolved an alternative agenda. Perhaps it has not. Talking to New Delhi is not a new phenomenon. Since its birth in 1993, the conglomerate has been talking to New Delhi. It started with many an interlocutors ranging from O.P. Shah to some European and American diplomats. No less than the US Ambassador, Mr. Frank Wisner plunged himself actively in Kashmir politics and made all out endeavors to make the APHC agree to participate in the 1996 elections. Many an American

Embassy officials are now familiar faces in lanes and by lanes of Srinagar. True, the APHC talking to New Delhi through various interlocutors was not a well structured exercise but after the conglomerate authorizing Syed Ali Shah Geelani to talk to New Delhi on track two it had attained some seriousness. The exercise continued after Geelani's tenure also. During the incumbency of Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat as chairman APHC it suffered a nose dive and every one in the conglomerate followed his own agenda and made an effort to create his own lobby in the North and South Blocks. The dialogue at the interlocutor level almost ended in a fiasco. New Delhi capitalized on this and believed that it will be easier to broke a solution with the truncated Hurriyat. Fact of the matter is that the divided Kashmir leadership is neither beneficial to New Delhi nor to Kashmir as it will delay dawning of permanent peace in the region rather speeding it up.

Much before the 9/11 and the so called changed 'dynamics of international politics' or General Parvez Musharraf's flexibility in his stand on Kashmir the APHC was engaged in a dialogue with New Delhi. But what is shameful is that it failed to draft even a dotted agenda for discussing with New Delhi. What I strongly feel that instead of working out nuts and bolts for starting a concrete dialogue with New Delhi for finding a peaceful solution for Kashmir it started addressing the galleries in New Delhi for winning small favours like "pieced-passports", 'foreign sojourns' and 'petty bouquets'. The track two dialogues could have taken a concrete shape and would have helped in bringing in lasting peace in the region. But for the role of some sleuths in Kashmir it got derailed. If information trickling out from New Delhi is to be believed senior Indian diplomat and later advisor to Prime Minister Mr. J.N. Dixit was wary of disturbing the track two dialogues by the sleuth and had very strongly objected to it and called a transitory winning over and not a win win situation for New Delhi.

It would be sheer naivety to think in contemporary situation about resolution of any problem without a dialogue. The dialogue is the key that can help in resolution of the most intricate and complex problems. But rushing through big exercises like holding of round table conference before having reached a fundamental agreement with the "contending party", I think it is premature. Whether the APHC (Mirwaiz) participate or not the proposed Conference may help New Delhi in gaining some diplomatic mileage but such a conference will not be substantially fruitful that could help in changing ground situation and bringing in lasting peace in the South Asia. The Conference at Srinagar if seen between the lines is funda

mentally in conflict with the concept of round table Conference. "The Oxford dictionary defines "round table" as "An assembly where parties meet on equal terms for discussion." Does the present conference fit in with this definition? As was said about the 1931 Round Conference by the then Congress leadership holds good for this conference as well. The Indian Round Table Conferences did not fit within this definition since the British Government issued the invitations, set the agenda and chaired the conferences." I believe instead what Churchill said about 1931 Round Table Conference in London erecting a "circus" there is need for addressing the fundamental issue. Much before holding mega shows there is need for working out nuts and bolts. This Round Table, I believe, is a structure without nuts and bolts perhaps destined to collapse.

Stretching RTC Thus Far

It was not King Arthur and his knights' legendary meeting. The second Round Table Conference on Kashmir may not have lived up to the Oxford Dictionary definition but it did attain a new definition- 'all family affairs'. It was more or less like soap opera family reunion where head of the family arrives with bagful of gifts, each member expecting something. Those who had gathered at the International Convention Centre, Srinagar on May 24-25, 2006 belonged to one family. Notwithstanding speaking in different dialects they belong to a common political lineage. They believe in 'finality of accession' of the State of Jammu and Kashmir with the Indian Union. In accordance with the Government of India's Policy about the United Nations Resolution on Jammu and Kashmir regarding allowing the people to exercise their right to self-determination they also believe that they had outlived their utility. Seen in true perspective there exists no chasm between New Delhi and the political leaders that had gathered at the SKICC on the question of the States future. The agenda for this conference was no different than the agenda's for all such earlier meets i.e. debating and discussing measures for strengthening the relations of the state with the Centre and removing all irritants in their relation. It was not a meeting what in common lexicon are known as "accessionists" but with the State BJP unit also keeping away from the meeting it was in fact a meeting of allies in power. The Pradesh Congress, the Peoples Democratic Party, the Communist Party and PDF are direct allies in power and the National Conference is an alliance partner by proxy.

Notwithstanding the conference being a 'family affair' it would be too myopic to call it a damp squib. The conference bore some tangible

results. It created five working groups. Group one targeted for building confidence amongst the people and providing healing touch to the effected population; group two, for improving upon ways and means for ensuring greater interaction and economic cooperation amongst Kashmiri's living on the two sides of LOC; group three, for addressing economic issues of the state, group four, ensuring good governance and group five, for suggesting measures for strengthen relations between New Delhi and Srinagar. Some of New Delhi political analysts denounced it as nothing but creating jobs for 'unemployed politicians' in the state or Prime Minister's old tactics of escaping 'confronting intractable problems by setting up working groups and committees'. These groups if constituted with objectivity and sincerity of purpose can help the Prime Minister Manmohan in looking at Kashmir problem outside the tailored and tinted bureaucratic notes. One may not agree with all the broader parameters drafted for the five groups as nothing is going to come out of strait-jacket bureaucratic phraseology. If Prime Minister Manmohan Singh sincerely believes in delivering people in India out of the terrifying Kashmir cleft, he will have to look at this issue outside the South and North Block phraseology which over a period has become quite hackneyed. There is no denying that there was need for introducing measures to provide some relief to the suffering people and for that besides good governance there was need for introducing some people friendly economic packages. But to think that these measures would work as an panacea for the prevailing situation would be too naïve. True, facilitating free traveling along the old Jhelum-Valley road may give some psychological relief to people and carry them to the make belief world that they had regained their 1947 status and position and restoring age old trade route to Kashmir may make them believe that they were going to recapture their traditional markets in the Central Asia. Seen in historical perspective whenever a demand for opening of the Jhelum-Valley road or Srinagar-Rawapindi road was made even by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, apart from political, it had economic dimensions. In the State People's Convention convened by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1968 an exhaustive paper was presented by one of the Plebiscite Front leaders deliberating upon the importance of Srinagar-Rawapindi Road for the state economy. It was described as jugular vein for the Kashmir Trade. If the traffic between two Kashmiris without restrictions and bureaucratic rigmarole is allowed, it would be a great step forward and would definitely be an important Confidence Building Measures (CBM)

There is no denying that RTC convened by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for not succeeding in roping in the political organization espousing the cause of right to self-determination failed to get an international acceptability. With the kind of agenda drafted for the conference, it was not expected of leaders like Syed Ali Shah Geelani (Chairman APHC), Mohammad Yaseen Malik (Chairman JKLF) and Shabir Ahmed Shah (Democratic Freedom Party) or others for having participated in the conference. So far they have been averse to any solution within the frame of the Constitution of India. The APHC (Mirwaiz) leaders whom the Prime Minister pronounced as 'friends' despite indicating both collectively and individually their willingness to Prime Minister and his main interlocutor Prof. S.D. Soz for participation in the RTC, perhaps but for their public posturing could not have attended the conference on the set agenda. It is true, it kept itself away from the conference but it had no objections to the contents of the agenda but because it believed that the 'table was too crowded' and it could not sit with 'political hypocrites' an indirect reference to Dr. Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar Abdullah or even to Mufti Syed and his daughter. Some of New Delhi commentators have called 'friendly' (I should be allowed to use "friendly" rather than "moderate") Hurriyat as "disingenuous" and has castigated it for believing that it could be 'sole negotiator' with New Delhi. Whether the role played by Mirwaiz Farooq is disingenuous or politically agile is not now of many consequences as he has already opened his cards before Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Even if his two members would have been there along with the duo-politicians father and son, father and daughter, uncle and nephew it would not have made much of difference. The agenda would not have been changed. The course of events would have taken same direction as they took. The Prime Minister would have been witness to another show of what a correspondent of this paper called as "*pam-pam*". The APHC (Mirwaiz) in the post-round table conference seems to be caught up in a quandary whether it joins the other Hurriyat if not physically but emotionally needs to be seen

The most ostensible outcome or fallout, —depending upon how you look at it, of the Round Table Conference has been that the National Conference has started seeing greater role for itself in the working groups announced by the Prime Minister. The sagging faces of father-son duo leaders of the National Conference have suddenly become puffy and fluffy. The reason for their jubilation is clear as the creation of the working group to look into the Centre-State relations has opened yet another opportu-

nity for this party to press for implementation of the autonomy resolution passed by it in the state legislature. The other political parties believing in finality of accession with India may not have much greater role to play in these groups as they are not much concerned with revising the Centre-State relations but are interested in a role in the States Power politics. It should not be construed as being pessimistic. The constitution of five working groups is not going to alter the ground situation. What will matter more is the translating of the messages of zero tolerance towards custodial deaths' announcements regarding releasing of *détentes* into reality. But believing as some New Delhi commentators that these five groups could lead to 'self-governance' is stretching it thus far.

Understanding Jamat-e-Islami

Storm in a tea cup. A non-event. Nothing startling! That is how best one would describe the Jamat-e-Islamia general council meetings in the past. Man in the street who matters most in democracy never bothered about the single column news item inside newspapers about such activities of the organization. True, the Monday (June 26 2006) meeting of this organization at Srinagar would also have passed as an event of no consequences but for its decision of debarring the members of its political wing the Jammu and Kashmir Tahreek-e-Hurriyat from contesting the party elections.

Tahreek Hurriyat (T.H) is an improved version of the political bureau of this organization. It came into being out of philosophy of 'division of work', consequent to the decision taken by Jamat leadership in 2004.

To understand why this organization is debarring members of its political wing there is a need to understand the psyche of some of its leaders. Does it really want to wriggle out of the ongoing movement stealthily? Has T.H. Politics proved too heavy a baggage for it. Much before one delves deeper into these issues there is a need to look into genesis of this organization and its graduating to the centre stage of Kashmir politics.

The thirties and forties of the past century were highly eventful. People of the state particularly Muslims had risen in revolt against the oppressive rule of the feudal and autocratic rule. From Chitral to Askardu, from Poonch to Paranpilla, from Mirpur to Muzzafarbad, from Baramulla to Bhadarwah there was a revolt against the feudal autocracy. It was not only new political leadership of Kashmir that was playing the lead role in its

battle against autocracy but the pulpit was also making its contribution to it. In this fast changing atmosphere a young Islamic scholar Maulana Syed Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903-79) was influencing young minds through his writings and discourse in the undivided Punjab. For the greater interaction that Kashmir had with Punjab through handicraft traders and Kashmir laborers the writings of this Islamic scholar also found their way into Kashmir. The writings influenced a few young men and four out of them attended the first all-India *ijetama* (congregation) of Jamat-e-Islami at Pathankot in 1945. After their return they started their activities under the leadership of a science graduate Sa'aduddin who remained chief of this organization till his retirement in 1985. Another youth from Zurhima Bandipora Syed Ali Shah Geelani joined them in 1949.

This organization initially had no political ambitions and it was desirous of enforcing Islam in its entirety and pristine form in the state. Many historians have seen this movement as an extension of the movement launched by Maulana Rasool Shah Sahib (1855-1909) against the 'widespread' 'un-Islamic practices amongst Kashmiri Muslims through the establishment of an organization Anjuman Nusrat-ul-Islam.

There is no denying that this organization initially was totally insulated against the people's movement in the state. At crucial stage of 1947, almost all of its office bearers being employees of the government, kept away from politics and virtually did not support or oppose accession with. It was much later in sixties that it started nursing political ambitions. In seventies this organization started looking forward for a role in the state's power game and joined the electoral politics. It is a jigsaw puzzle as why this organization which started purely as a religious reformative organization entered into the election arena when the premier pro-right to self-determination organization the Plebiscite Front had boycotted them. Majority of the Jamat-e-Islami leaders claim of having opposed the move but how did it happen? (I may write some time later) In 1990, when some youth started what is termed by the organization as "*musalah judajihad*" it plunged into it lock, stock and barrel. Its rank and file, like many other organizations suffered deaths and destruction. The party claims that two thousand of its office bearers and workers were killed. Many in this party are at present 'remorseful' about this decision and disown its 'combatant cadre' brazenly.

What prompted this organization to plunge into the election arena is of much consequences at present but the question is; did this organiza-

tion ever consciously work in support of the movement for right to self-determination? There can be no denying that this organization, like many other political parties, believes that the people of the state have yet to exercise their right to self-determination. Another important question connected to exercise of right to self-determination is with the party ever has been part of this movement. There are no two opinions that the party leaders, workers and supporters suffered like multitudes of Kashmiris for this cause but it cannot be denied that this organization always suffered a diarchy on the question of its being participants to this movement. Demand for right to self-determination was 'secondary' not primary issue before this party. Majority of leaders of this organization have always pleaded for being passive participants to the 'on going movement', only a few whose number could be counted on finger tips have supported active participation in the 'movement for right to self-determination'. Syed Ali Shah Geelani undoubtedly has been prominent pro-right to self-determination face of the organization. He had his critics in the party but it would be naïve to think that he did not enjoy support of its cadres. He opted out of becoming Amir-e-Jamat twice, once in 1977 and second in 1985. In July 1977 at Zalloora *shoora* meeting of this organization he was unanimously elected chief of the organization but he preferred to work at lower level as he thought that responsibility was too big for him at that time. In 1985 again the electoral college had voted him but much before he would take over as chief of this organization he was detained and released after twenty two months.

This organization worked zealously and created a cadre of its own in all parts of the state. Fact of the matter is that it has been just two persons that have provided this organization the pro-right to self-determination façade, one Maulana Saddudin and two Syed Ali Shah Geelani. It will be hard to deny that it was Geelani who played catalytic role in motivating younger generation particularly the educated youth towards the organization. In seventies for his vociferous opposition of Indra-Sheikh Accord, he emerged as darling of the students and youth. It was the youth who rallied around him in seventies and eighties. He emerged as a strong voice of 'right to self-determination' in eighties and nineties both for combatant and non-combatants.

Is it for Geelani, President of the Tahreek Hurriyat, having become *bete noire* for New Delhi that Jamat-e-Islami has decided to debar its own members from participating in the party elections? Tahreek Hurriyat

for all purposes is a political outfit of Jamat-e-Islami as it has come into being under an agreement which continues to be in vogue till date – not having been nullified so far.

The question arises is that the notice issued by the organization to the members of the Tahreek to disassociate themselves by June 30? targeted at preventing Geelani from becoming chief of the Jamat? Geelani in my opinion has far grown the stature of the Jamat Chief. He has grown in his political stature in the eyes of international community for opposing India, Pakistan and Hurriyat Conference tackling of Kashmir problem. In fact it is the General Secretary of Tahreek Hurriyat, Ashraf Sahari who could be a challenge for election to the position of Jamat Chief.

It will be too early to draw conclusions, whether Jamat survives as a political organization or it will just become a socio-religious organization. The tone and tenor of the leaders suggest that it wants to put cause right to self-determination to back burner' and concentrate on social activities such as looking after its educational institutions. It believes that debarring is a safety valve. In such a dispensation it will yield place for Tahreek Hurriyat to play a pro-active role.

'Dynamics' of Political Phraseology

Kashmir politics has its own dictionary. Every year new words and phrases are added to it. After every mega and mini political event or development a newer word or phrase creeps into it. Some of the phrases after remaining in currency for sometime lose their sheen, luster and relevance. Then they are relegated to the pages of history. But they do remain a part of this dictionary. Some do survive longer and retain power of whipping public sentiments as and when required. Let me call this dictionary for its distinctiveness of the words and phrases that have been added to it during past seventy six years as 'politico-lexicon-Kashmiri.

The words contained in this 'politico-lexicon-Kashmiri have their own etymology. This etymology in fact is as good as an index to Kashmir history and a single word and phrase speaks about an event and political development in the state. This dictionary is also like Darwin's Origin of Species which talks about evolution of humans. This dictionary provides an insight into the evolution of Kashmiri's own political breed, different from the rest of the world. True, majority of the words and phrases that have thundered people's ears for years together have now been entombed but their recounting and analysis is of relevance for all students of Kashmir politics even today. It will not be possible to encompass all these political clichés in this column but I will try to look at a few that I believe would unfold the seamy side of Kashmir politics and also provide pointers towards the failures of the 'pro-right to self-determination' politics in the state.

The "dynamics of politics" is the latest phrase in currency in Kashmir politics these days. The author of this phrase like many other recent

phrases, is the Professor leader of the APHC (friendly). This phrase often finds its place in the press notes released by this party on important occasion like the one it issued at the time of holding of the Round Table Conference by Prime Minister in which it had stated that dynamics of Kashmir politics suggested that the APHC should not share table with 'political hypocrites and Ikhwanis'. This faction of Hurriyat has been taking shelter under this phrase for most of its actions including talking to various official and unofficial committees and groups constituted by New Delhi from time to time. This phrase that caught imagination of the APHC leaders after the 9/11, is a big canopy that has helped it to cover up departure from the traditional stand of 'pro-right to self-determination' and make themselves look more progressive. This phrase whatever its meaning in the dictionary found a new meaning in 'politico-lexicon-kashmiri'. The meaning that got attributed to it has been 'retracing the steps'. Seen in a proper perspective it has been attribution of meaning to this phrase that in fact has resulted in the fragmentation of the APHC into as many as five factions. The APHC (geelani/bellicose) believed that the phrase "dynamics of Kashmir politics" is pregnant with many more meanings than in Oxford, Cambridge or Webster dictionaries. These meanings are fraught with dangers that have the potential of 'derailing the on going movement'. It is a matter of analysis if the frequent use of this phrase suggests a change of mood in the APHC or not. But there are some evidences that corroborate it that it does suggest a change in the mind set. The changed phraseology of the APHC could be taken as important evidence. The question that will continue to haunt the public mind as to when will this phrase steer the APHC(friendly) to some destination or will this phrase also end up like many others pass-out into the Kashmir dictionary as a trite.

The birth of new political phrases awfully suggest changing political moods of the political parties. The spontaneous people upsurge in 1990 in support of 'exercise of right to self-determination as contained in the United Nations Resolutions' that not only shook the state administration but swept away many a traditional political stalwarts of their roots like 'wood-drifts' caught up in gushing waters. This force with which the people's upsurge was moving had become a cause of concern for the two power centers in the sub-continent whose stability hinges on Kashmir situation. To provide it direction the idea of launching a strong political front was mooted. Whether the idea of launching the APHC was mooted in Manadi Jail where the top leadership of Kashmir was under detention in

early nineties or it was imported from outside is not at present my concern. The APHC after its birth also introduced a phrase to the 'politico-lexicon-Kashmiri'. This phrase 'negotiated settlement' at the face of it, was quite innocuous but when seen in the context of the history of birth of Kashmir problem which Alastair Lamb has called "birth of a tragedy" was as good as betraying the history of Kashmir dispute. It was as good as negation of the United Nations Resolution. I once asked the ablest of the then United Hurriyat Conference Kh. Abdul Ghani Lone as to how this phrase had crept into the Constitution of the conglomerate and if there was an explanatory note attached to this phrase with regard to its limits. He too had not a clear idea about the incorporation of the phrase in the Hurriyat Constitution. The impression I gathered (may be wrong) was that this flexibility in the traditional stand by the APHC leaders was brought in at the behest of some American and European diplomats that frequented the state during those days. Looking at the incorporation of this phrase in the Hurriyat constitution amply proves that the conglomerate had diluted its stand much before the changed mood in Pakistan establishment particularly general Musharraf. True, the phrase 'negotiated settlement' is not in currency these days with any of the Hurriyat leaders (friendly or bellicose) but it continues to be in the constitution of the both the factions. I do not know if the phrase exists in the JKLF (Yasin) or not but practical dispensation and disposition of this group also suggests that it also believes in the negotiated settlement which could be anything like 'accepting status quo', 'autonomy', 'some alterations in LoC', 'division' or whatnot. I think none of the groups have clarity of mind about the 'negotiated settlement'. It is a very vague term dotted with many pit holes.

History bears testimony that in Kashmir, change of phraseology has always been a prelude to some or the other political compromise. As a precursor to the 1975 Indra-Sheikh Accord, Sheikh Abdullah and Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg changed their political phraseology. The phrases 'we want plebiscite' or 'our birthright self-determination' were replaced by 'azad-abru ka muqam' "(position of dignity and honor)". This new phrase was coined much before the 'dismemberment of Pakistan' and birth of Bangladesh. It was born during the State People's Convention in 1968, which in my view was an important benchmark in the changed mood of Sheikh Abdullah. After the birth of Bangladesh this phrase got another dimension 'place of dignity and honor within the framework of Indian constitution'. This dimension culminated into six-point accord- between Sheikh Abdullah and New Delhi. Ironically, this accord also failed to grow

beyond textbook relevance.

It will be too early to say when the 'phrase dynamics of Kashmir politics' metamorphoses into "Understanding the ground reality", then accepting the situation as it obtains "fait accompli" and 'steer clear of Kashmir problem junk'. Let us wait and watch what new phrases and words are added to 'politico-lexicon-kashmir'.

Riches to Rags, Rags to Riches

I am awestricken. Not for cocked rifles protruding out of the slits of the concrete bunkers dotting my birth burg. Not for proving my identity at ten places a day to a soldier alien to my language and culture. Not for being goaded away from buying grocery in marketplaces by irritating whistles. Not for witnessing a constable hitting butts at a public transport driver. Not for the honks of number- plate-less gypsies making me cave into public at busy Lal Chowk. True, it is no more chafing to make way for speeding twin-flagged cars or wait for hours to allow a VIP cavalcade to pass through the street. I along with multitudes have learned to live through the agony with a cosmetic smile on dried up lips and otherwise sullen face. My endurance is not for what Walter R Lawrence had described having become *zulum Parasat* and "heart having been taken out of me" but for what my favourite Kashmir poet (for diction) Dina Nath Nadim had said, "*Ma Chaham Aash Pagh Hich* (I have a hope in tomorrow).

The question is can that tomorrow come for which people in the salubrious vales and dales have been waiting from 1819. Whenever I have been addressing this question I suffer from terrifying disappointment, pessimism overwhelms me and I grope in the dark. Like millions others I crave for a leader as big and great as Gandhi and Quaid. The story of Indian leaders whether Congress or the Muslim League who fought heroic battle against the British Imperialism and won it, is from riches to rags. Gandhi was no ordinary mortal, as very aptly said by Llyod I Rudolph in his latest book 'Post Modern Gandhi', "Gandhi who described himself in his autobiography as descended from a caste of petty merchants and was in fact the son and grandson of princely states prime ministers". This

charismatic leader of India bade adieu to personal comforts to redeem teeming millions from centuries old poverty and deprivation. Same is true about leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana, Abul Kalam Azad, Saradar Patil and Subash Chander Bose. These people looked at life from harder-side and not from the cozy '*dewan Khana's*' with hanger-on's lavishing all praise for their eloquence and wisdom. Quaid Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah who "virtually conjured a nation-state by the force of his indomitable will and whose place in Pakistan's history looms like a lofty minaret over the achievements of all his contemporaries" was not lured by riches but sacrificed riches and comfort for the cause. Liaquat Ali Khan right hand to Quaid was none other than son of Nawab Rustum Ali Khan the great landlord of Karnal (now in Haryana) whose estates ran into thousands of acres of land and who unlike many pampered Nawabzadas was an Oxford scholar who dared the British and spoke for India at the Oxford University, also left his personal comforts and fought against the British and for the creation of Pakistan relentlessly with his leader. So is true about Allama Mohammad Iqbal, Abdul Rub Nishtar and host of Muslim League leaders who were not enticed by riches nor trapped in the booby nets of greed cast by the British but sacrificed their riches and preferred rags. It was commitment of these leaders that saw Gandhi's *Sawaraj* emerge as a truth or the Lahore Resolution translated into reality in seven years only.

Sense of history I believe is a tormenter in our situations. It has been this sense that has been making me to draw parallels between our contemporary leaders and the then Congress and the Muslim League leaders. I may not talk about puppets and tinpots in our politics for Quaid believed it was "a gentleman's game". When I compare the towering who dominated the political scene during our childhood and youth- I feel my self reduced to a midget. Instead of delivering us out of the centuries old servitude they pushed us into a political morass. It is not only the people of the state that are sinking in this morass but day in day out entire sub-continent is caving in. There can be no denying. History bears testimony that it was the *faux pas* of our leadership that is responsible for the macabre that is being enacted for past fifty nine years in the State. Thousands have been killed and maimed along 850 Kms. long LOC, (an artificial line vivisectioning the state) and thousands others have been consumed during past seventeen but for the *faux pas* of these leaders these precious lives would have been saved. What has been unfortunate that our politicians never gathered wisdom from the experiences of others nor from their own

failings. The dubious distinction of our leaders has been that they have always repeated their own mistakes and repeated them not only to the dismay of their admirers but for compounding the people's problems and troubles. What were guiding principles of our leaders- it is a jigsaw puzzle for me. Was personal comforts and person more sacred to them than people dreams? Or it was their myopic vision that guided them or lack of their political consciousness that made them steer the boat against the tide, till it got caught up in a whirlpool.

I have been often writing that schism and Kashmir politics are born together. It was this schism that had made Allama Mohammad Iqbal to lament. It was this schism that had disappointed Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Seen in retrospect it was this schism that worked as a catalyst for, what Alastair Lamb called as "birth of tragedy". It is not that the cause of trouble is a classified document hidden from the eye of our contemporary leadership but it is their reluctance to know the cause of failure of our first generation leadership. Our third generation leadership like many of my contemporaries has been blaming first generation leaders for the stories of agonies and pain that are being written in the lanes and by lanes, villages and dales of the state on daily basis. Admitted! But, the question is, what is their own role in changing the political landscape of the state and redeeming people of their torture and torment. If I would ask them a simple question what divides them, what answer they have. What blasted the Hurriyat Conference- sending splinters in all directions and bruising people's hearts? It did not split because its leaders have been professing different ideologies- those contradictions apart it had drawn an agreed upon agenda itself for leading the people of the state. Is it politics that divided them or something else- many times, whenever I talk about our 'beloved' leadership I do not know why Marlow's Dr. Faustus come to my mind- may be there is something in my sub-conscious about these leaders that I dare not to talk about or write about. It is not the Hurriyat only that has been suffering from 'schism virus' but even political parties like the Peoples League which was born out of an ideology at a time when it was believed that an epitaph reading: "Right to Self-Determination buried for ever" was written on the grave of the Plebiscite Front have fragmented into as many a dozen of groups. The People's League like the Plebiscite Front was believed to be an organization of committed and dedicated youth and students. So is true of Jamat-e-Islamia it did not suffer from any ideological dichotomy but how it got divided into moderates and hardliners, what is moderate and what is hard-line in this organization

founded by great Islamic Scholar of the twentieth century Maulana Abul'al Mawdudi. For me these posers have no answers other than our leaders are unlike the other leaders of the sub-continent who made it from riches to rags and our own (majority) made it from rags to riches.

No 'Gourd and Brinjal' Politics

It is an impression. It is a common man's perception that finds an articulation in all social gatherings in Kashmir. It is an opinion that has been gaining strength for past two years that the Pakistan establishment wants to steer itself clear of Kashmir problem. It will be perhaps too sweeping a statement to say that Pakistan intends to wriggle out of the Kashmir situation but there can be no denying that the buzzword in Islamabad for past few years has been "flexibility". On the face of it this word is quite innocuous, it simply means changing easily according to situation but in diplomatic parlance it means much more. It means a climbing down from traditional stand and yielding place for a compromise.

Has Pakistan climbed down from its traditional stand on Kashmir? This is not very complex question that would need lots of permutations and combination to find an answer. The Pakistan Foreign Office statements during past two years bear a testimony to this hard fact that it has departed from its traditional policy on Kashmir. The words and phrases like 'Plebiscite', 'referendum', 'right to self-determination', 'UN resolutions', 'taking the issue to security council' and 'third party mediation' are no more in use with Pakistan Foreign Ministry instead the statements mostly refrain and repeat the 'loose ending' proposal of President General Musharraf. If one looks at the 'loose ending proposals' of Pakistan President dispassionately and in right perspective they are highly 'flexible' with latent quality of getting stretched to any extent. Seen in historical perspective these proposals seen are a total departure from Pakistan fifty seven year old stand. Whether, one should call Musharraf's proposals, as iconoclastic, pragmatic, defeatist or vague is a separate subject which

needs to be dealt separately. But the question is, if these proposals have whole hog support of the Pakistan establishment or General sahib is single sparrow – that cannot make spring. On the face of it there seems that the General is carrying full establishment with him for his changed stance on Kashmir but if one goes by innocent comment made by one of the Hurriyat leader after meeting Pakistan President it seems that the not to speak of the Pakistan nation the establishment is not also in agreement with his Kashmir policy.' To illustrate this point there is need for recounting the deliberations that took place between the General Musharraf and the Hurriyat leaders in Islamabad last year. Believing that Syed Ali Shah Geelani was the *bete noire* and General Musharraf did not like his statements and political posture, one of the Hurriyat leaders passed on sardonic remarks about Geelani in the meeting and blamed his 'stubbornness' for coming up as 'stumbling block' in the peaceful settlement of the Kashmir problem. If the Hurriyat leader is to be believed that three out of the four top Pakistan officers did not like the comments and raised their eyebrows -one can easily construed that the General does not have complete support of the establishment for his half-baked proposals. The proposal of self-governance has thick blanket around it. No explanatory notes have been so far made available on this proposal. The proposal surprisingly has found supporters in 'pro-accession' political parties in the state. The National Conference has been asserting that the proposal was an affirmation of its concept of 'greater autonomy'. The Communist Party, the Pradesh Congress and other political parties have also been supporting this proposal which to them means holding of free and fair elections in the state for giving a good democratic government. The Hurriyat Conference (friendly) is still searching meaning of this phrase in the context of finding a permanent solution to the Kashmir problem. True, Professor Leader of this faction has been talking on this topic to his captive audience at the APHC, Rajbagh office but so far no serious debates or discussions have been held on these newly coined phrases in the context of Kashmir problem. It has been tragedy that the Kashmir academia by and larger have been self-severing text book teachers and they have never grown beyond their goody goody staff room gossips. They are yet to reach to that level where they could debate and discuss issues having greater import for the people of the state.

Notwithstanding the proposals of self-governance put forth by General Musharraf ostensibly being a departure from Pakistan known stand

on Kashmir have caught the imagination of some of the Kashmir Diasporas. To elicit public opinion on the 'loose ending' proposal of General Musharraf the Kashmir American Council is holding an international essay competition. "The theme of the essay is "South Asian Stability Post President Bush's Visit" and one has to incorporate any one of the following sub-themes that will also be topics of discussion at the forthcoming conference: Kashmir: New Hopes and Aspirations; Is Self-Governance a means towards Self-Determination?; Demilitarization: First step towards setting a stage for settlement; and Kashmir: Human Rights Dimension." The winners of the top nine essays would receive a cash prize based on the three categories of submission: undergraduate students [US \$ 500.00], graduate students [US \$ 800.00], and professional [US \$ 1,000.00]. Moreover, the winners of the top three essays would be invited to read out their winning essays at the Sixth International Kashmir Peace Conference to be held on July 20-21, 2006 at the Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. All travel [economy class airfare]. June 17th 2006 has been fixed as deadline for online submission of essays. I do not know if there have been any online entries so far or not but it has mailed to almost every journalist, academician and historian in Srinagar and outside. The essay competition may not be of much consequence for Kashmir problem but it would provide slit to peep through into the mind of some promising Kashmiri as how they look at the changed stance of Pakistan establishment on Kashmir. It is not also of much consequence whether the idea of holding an essay competition and conference on the proposals of General Musharraf is that of KAC Director or of Mahmud Ali Durrani Pakistan Ambassador in Washington. Author of three important books on India-Pakistan relations and one of important interlocutors. But, one credit goes to KAC that it has succeeded in roping in India and Pakistan intellectuals to debate and discuss various dimensions of Kashmir problem and to elicit opinion from them for finding out alternative solutions to the vexed Kashmir problem.

One may not agree with the subject chosen by the KAC for its next conference at Washington but it would be wrong to dismiss the effort as of no consequences but there is need for debating the proposal of self-governance and demilitarization in academic and intellectuals circles of Srinagar as well. Whether self-governance is means to self-determination and demilitarization is step toward the final settlement needs to be debated and discussed both at academic and public level. There is need to understand that nothing much is expected from the overawed Kashmir leadership- that is yet to learn that leading 'freedom movement' is like a

riding a tiger. And leader has to keep on riding or get swallowed. Time has cast a greater role for Kashmir academia and intellectuals for redeeming the suffering of people. It has to play a proactive role in steering the Kashmir polity out of the whirlpool of uncertainty. Seen in retrospect the Kashmir suffered because of the "gourd and brinjal" (Alla Karagaya Wangan Karagaya) politics. The gourd and brinjal politics may seem Greek to younger generation. In broader terms it could be translated as blind faith in leadership. It was this blind faith in leadership that proved to be a 'tragic flaw' in the state's body politics. True, there was a voice of dissent against this gourd and brinjal politics but it always got drowned in the cacophony of personality oriented politics of the state.

The people of the state can no more afford the gourd and brinjal politics.

IDDGAH TO PAMPORE

Saturday February 22, 2003, 4.30 PM, reclining against a bolster, with *Kangri* tucked underneath my *pheran* and eyes glued to lifeless grey television screen, I was eagerly waiting for the restoration of electricity for watching an important World Cup match to be played between Pakistan and England. My phone rang up. It was a friend, editor of local news daily on the line. "Hello! Did you hear! Farooq Abdullah and Omer Abdullah were not allowed to address an election rally in Pampore. They were pelted out by the irate mob and their vehicles were smashed. People shouted slogans against Farooq Abdullah and Omer Abdullah. Isn't it for the first time?" Much before I would reply my friend, many ideas leaped into my mind. 'What was so important in this news? Why did he ring me up for a routine election rally skirmish?' Was it really for the first time that Abdullah's had to witness such a public wrath? Pampore was bastion of Sheikh Abdullah. It was an impregnable fortress of the National Conference. Did this change in public mood indicate hatred for the National Conference or Abdullah's or beyond?" I had witnessed change in people's mood about in 1986, when Farooq Abdullah was hounded out of Iddgah by agitated youth.

Much before, I would address the question why Abdullah's lost their bastions; I was flooded by a barrage of flashbacks. I remembered the awful Bakshi era, with all stories about "*Guga sarkar*" and eleven years of progress, development, corruption, nepotism, terror and intimidation and struggle of Democratic National Conference and the Communists against this rule. I remembered how the great edifice of Bakshi rule crumbled after the 1964 Holy Relic Movement without causing a ripple in placid waters of

Dal Lake. I remembered how an irate mob hurled a *Kangri* (firepot) on Bakshi Abdul Rashid, the then General Secretary of the National Conference. Hurling of *Kangri* on the then most powerful person in the State was symbolic; it was a manifestation of public mood — an expression of hate people had for the ruling family. This incident in fact heralded end of the Bakshi era in Kashmir politics. After this incident charismatic Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad with all his leadership qualities and political maneuverability failed to make a comeback in the State politics. With changed priorities of New Delhi he suddenly become lonesome, many of trusted friends also bade adieu to him. I remember of seeing him on a Shop on the Posh Residency Road just below India Coffee House (Now Showroom for ladies dresses and cosmetics), brooding, and melancholic and discontented. The Khalid Kashmir of yesterday and Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru's trustworthy man had suddenly become a useless cog in the state politics. Somehow to me there seems a similarity between the 1964 Lal Chowk happening and February 2003 Pampore occurrence. It undoubtedly was an expression of public wrath against former Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah and his party. True, the intensity of public resentment this time was far lesser than that of 1988 out burst on the eve of Eid in Iddgah, Srinagar but it was more significant and far reaching. Scenes after scenes started rolling before my eyes; hundreds of chapels were showered on this day on Dr. Farooq Abdullah, glass panes of his car were smashed by irate mob, projectiles from all directions hit his motorcade, he did escape unhurt but his political secretary bled profusely. Little did I realize then that this foreshadowed bigger happenings and occurrences that did put the state out of gear later on? Naively, like majority of Kashmiris I believed that the legacy of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was a perennial asset with Dr. Farooq Abdullah and his National Conference. I believed that the Land Reforms, Abolishing of Big Landed Estates and other progressive measures taken by Sheikh Abdullah during his first government guaranteed a permanent vote bank for the National Conference in the rural areas. My belief was not imaginary, I had been a witness to many an important events in the contemporary Kashmir history. In 1964, with many children of my locality, I had traveled from School to Batwara to receive Sheikh Abdullah, after his release from Kud Jail. It was heroes welcome that people had accorded to him. Slogans like *Sher-I-Kashmir Zinda Bad*, *Asia Ka Biland Sitara* and Long Live Abdullah rented the air. It was a procession that I never witnessed in my life afterwards. Drummers, clarinets and musicians from all parts of valley had converged on the city of

Srinagar to greet the then most towering leader of Kashmir. He had a magic spell. With his fingers on people's pulse, he was capable of converting adverse situations to his advantage. I remembered how tactfully he converted his political surrender in 1975 into a great show- a mega pageant. On his return to Srinagar after Indra-Sheikh Abdullah Accord, which announced end of twenty two years struggle for right to self-determination he addressed a mammoth public rally in a historical Lal Chowk and very deftly retraced his steps from the movement he had led for decades. He very successfully took wind out of the sails of vociferously opposite to the Accord viz the Jammāt-e-Islamia, the Awami Action Committee and the Peoples League. He did draw ovation from public even on his defeat. He had mastered the psyche of an ordinary Kashmiri. To retain his popularity he tactfully played on his parochial sentiments. I remember one of his speeches at Martyrs Graveyard, in Srinagar. "*Hum aik Qayoom hain, Nai, hum Hindustan, na Pakistan Ka Ghulam hain, hum na Indra Gandhi Ka Ghulam hain na Zai-ul-Haq Ghulam hain. Hum zani rehanga upne bal par*". (We are a nation. We are neither India's nor Pakistan slaves. We are neither Gandhis's nor Zai-ul-Haq's slave. We will survive on our own strength." Farooq undoubtedly inherited height and complexion of his father but many a genes perhaps were not transmitted to him. Nervousness is an important trait of his personality. He lost credibility with the people for his shakiness. In fact the 1984 dismal sapped from him what ever little courage he had. He concluded: Survival in politics depends on subservience to New Delhi and not in popular mandate. People to him became nothing but drawers of water and hewers of wood, who could be very easily ignored. I do not know if debacle in the 2002 elections has taught him a new lesson or not but Pampore incident perhaps had far louder message for him than debacle in the elections. The message was clear that people are the ultimate power and not the bureaucrats and sleuths sitting in grey concrete buildings.

After the Pampore incident, I have come to realize that the old generation that had seen Abdullah leading the movement is dead. The new generation recognizes Abdullah's as symbols of oppression and tyranny with their hand stained with blood of thousands of innocent who were killed in fake encounters and custody. To refurbish their image they will have offer many a penance.

US STAKES IN KASHMIR

"We cannot build peace through desire alone" are golden words of Dwight D. Eisenhower United States President in early fifties. Peace, no doubt, a very noble word cannot be achieved in isolation. As the adage goes, it takes two to make a cheer, peace also can be achieved only after the two hostile parties aspire and work for achieving the same. Ever since the birth of India and Pakistan as two independent and sovereign dominions the two countries have fought four wars and scores of battles. Fifty two year old acrimonious history of the two nations has also some oasis. The leaders of two countries irrespective of having gained substantial proficiency in 'war-talk' have occasionally been talking of peace also. But peace talks have been far and rare. It cannot be demised that Kashmir has been cause for both the wars and war-talks between the two countries. It would be naïve of the leaders in the two countries to think of peace in the region without removing the fundamental cause of tension between the two countries. There can also be no denying that tension between the two countries has the potential of spilling over to other regions of the state.

The US Secretary of State Colin Powell talked plane truth when he stated that Kashmir was on the international agenda. The Secretary was not referring to the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir but he was hinting at threats this problem was posing to the international peace. It would be difficult for even the best of the diplomats to make the international community believe about Kashmir problem being a non-threat to the global peace. On his third visit in ten months as part of efforts to reduce Indo-Pak tensions Powell made some plain talking about peace in the region during his meetings with the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee

and Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf. He told a press conference about the importance and import of the forthcoming elections in the State that the United States looked forward that India would take concrete steps by India to foster Kashmiri confidence in the election process. Permitting independent observers and freeing political prisoners would be helpful. He also made it clear that elections were no solution. The US secretary was not off the cuff but he made a well calculated and targeted statement.

The NDA leadership needs to read the writing on the wall. The statements made by Colin Powell at New Delhi and Islamabad need to be understood in the perspective of the changed global scenario. The two countries cannot leave wounds open and expect them to heal. There is need for starting a dialogue between the two countries. Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai of Kashmir American Council has very aptly stated in an article that at this juncture the concern should be for setting a stage rather than to shape the settlement and it was both untimely and harmful at this stage to indulge in encouraging controversies. It needs to be emphasized that status quo does not suit people of India and Pakistan except a tribe of Kashmir politicians who have been fattening at the expenses of people of the state on the dispute. The resolution of Kashmir dispute to the aspiration of the people of the state would by and large guarantee peace in the region.

CLINTON AND KASHMIR

Kashmir problem has been main area of concern for the United States for the past fifty-two years. From President Harry S. Truman to President Bill Clinton every US President has expressed concern over the perpetuation of the dispute. In fact, Kashmir dispute has had a pivotal position in the State Departments South Asian policy of the United States. But, why did United States fail in finding a solution to the Kashmir problem? This question needs to be understood in a historical perspective.

Kashmir problem assumed international dimension with the Government of India taking it to the United Nations in 1947. From the birth this problem the United States has been supporting resolution of the problem on internationally recognized principle of right to self determination. The United States not only supported the passing of the UN resolutions of 1948 and 1949 but in fact were the co-sponsors of these resolutions. In April 1949, following the presentation of the UNCIP's memorandum to Government of India and Pakistan President Truman and the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee issued parallel appeals to the two governments urging them to accept Commissions proposal. The memorandum by the Commissions President, Dr. Oldrich Chyle asked the two governments whether they would agree to the appointment of Fleet-Admiral as the Plebiscite Administrator to arbitrate on difference regarding implementation of the Resolution of August 13, 1948. The Commissions' recommendation were binding on both the countries. President Truman's appeal was warmly accepted by Pakistan. Pakistan Minister of Kashmir Affairs Mr. Mushtaq Gurmani described the appeal as a very realistic approach. India rejected this appeal. Indian Prime Minister denounced the appeal

and stated that no effort had been made to understand the fundamental issue.

The United States stand on Kashmir was not taken as a friendly gesture by India. In the words of an Indian Foreign Affairs writer K.K. Misra, (Kashmir-India's Foreign Policy.) "For whatsoever reason the United States has all along taken a stand on the Kashmir question, which has undoubtedly been pro-Pakistan. This anti-India attitude over the Kashmir has invariably affected India's relations with the United States."

The United States stand on Kashmir in the UN Security Council and outside pushed the dispute into the lap of cold war. History bears testimony to the hard reality that the cold war politics defeated resolution of the problem. The proceedings of the UN Security Council are replete with the Soviet Union opposing all the moves made towards the resolution of the problem by the United States and other European countries. Debate on Kashmir in the states looked like a war between Kremlin and Washington. Communists irrespective of their geographical locations opposed any move by the Western world. The unsettled status of the Jammu and Kashmir was almost made to look to be a war between Communism and Capitalism. The Communists in India and particularly in Kashmir headed by Gulam Mohammed Sadiq dubbed any moves by the Western world as an imperialist conspiracy against people of India.

The Soviet veto over Kashmir in the United Nations made Washington to think in terms of finding a solution to the problem outside the precincts of the august body. All the United States Presidents offered to mediate between India and Pakistan to find a solution to the problem. President John F Kennedy offered to mediate. In a note to Prime Minister of India and Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and President of Pakistan, General Mohammad Ayoob Khan he stressed the need for resolution of the Kashmir problem and offered his good offices to help in the settlement of the dispute. In his note to the two leaders he suggested Mr. Eugene Black as mediator. Mr. Eugene was an able mediator. He had earned an enviable reputation by successfully 'untying the intricate knot of the canal waters dispute. President Kennedy's letter did not evoke a positive response from Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. What were the contents of letter continues to be a secret as the papers are yet to be declassified. The leaks that were made to the press at that time suggested that Nehru at that time had suggested of making the Cease-Fire Line now LOC as permanent border with minor modifications. But according to the Pakistan Times of January

31, 1962, "Diplomatic circles here believed that Nehru's reply to President Kennedy's letter on the subject had killed the suggestion put forward by India itself to solve the problem. Pakistan welcomed the mediator offer. But in the words of an Indian expert on Kashmir dispute Mr. Surrender Chopra, (The mediation in Kashmir) "In 1962 India's stand had hardened so much that maximum it could concede now was to accept Pakistan's illegal control of Jammu and Kashmir territory." Pakistan outrightly rejected the offer of minor adjustment to the LOC. In a press conference at Lahore Ayoob Khan rejected the offer on being in total contradiction to the principle of right to self determination. Despite the fact the United States could not make any headway in casting itself into a mediatory role, it encouraged a direct dialogue between the India and Pakistan. The marathon talks between Indian Foreign Minister, Swaran Singh and Pakistan Foreign Minister, were a fall out of the US efforts.

While India and Pakistan were busy in a dialogue, President Kennedy made another effort of playing a direct role in the resolution of the dispute. He deputed his top advisor, Walter Rostow to India and Pakistan. He met Prime Minister, Nehru and all others who mattered in New Delhi. In Pakistan he held talks with President Ayub Khan. He had his own partition of the state formula for resolving the issue. The formula was acceptable neither to Pakistan nor to India. The New York Times of April 8, 1963 carried a map of the partition formula. Mr. Rostow in his plan had even vivisected the Kashmir Valley. President Kennedy moved in some European countries as well to make India and Pakistan to agree to settle the issue.

In 1963, China invaded India. This invasion had its impact on the resolution of Kashmir problem. The United States policy towards India had a very significant shift. United States not only restored military assistance to India but also opposed Pakistan relations with Peking. In the words of Surrender Chopra, "India was forced to review its attitude towards direct negotiations with Pakistan when its armed forces suffered reverses in the Himalayas at the hands of the Chinese." In the words of Altaf Gowhar "Ayub (Pakistan President) anticipated the American and the Indian moves with remarkable insight and prepared his response in a firm and pragmatic manner... Had he succumbed to American pressure, he would have exposed Pakistan to China's hostility without winning the friendship of India." And surprisingly it was at this time when Washington seemed distancing itself from Islamabad that Pandit Nehru had agreed

to a "low key" mediation from the United States.

Oasis in Desert of Despondency

Silence! !! There is a hush-hush atmosphere everywhere. No soaring oratory; no fiery speeches; no loudspeakers blare across the square. There is no popping up of leaders like mushrooms on Fridays outside the mosques as was in the nineties. The historical Muslim Park where Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah addressed hundreds of thousands of people from nook and corner of the state. Where Chaudary Ghulam Abbas, Allah Rakha Sagar, Chowdary Hamidullah and K.H.Khurshid roared and dared the feudal autocracy. The park that echoed with thunderous applause for years with all towering leaders addressing the mammoth gatherings; the Park where half a million gathered to listen to leaders during the 1964 Holy Relic Movement is to day silent. Not to speak of creating a memorial at this historical site it has now been converted into a shanty market by none other than the people who claim to be the legal heirs of the Muslim Conference politics in the state. Insulting! Is it not insulting?

The historic Shahi Masjid grounds where Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah during his Plebiscite Front days mesmerized thousands of his supporters with recitation from the Holy Book and swayed them with his oratory; where Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg with his epigrams made people to burst into laughter and where Maulana Mohammad Syed Masoodi with his powerful oratory glued people to grass for hours together is today silent. Mujahid Manzil that still finds a mention in our histories is now a heap of debris. The spacious lawns of the Martyrs Graveyard where the Youth League leaders created history by challenging the then most towering leader is to day quiet. The spacious Iddgah no more looks like a tent city. Men with flowing beards draped in white Shalwar Kameez and scarves

slinging from their shoulders no more gather here for annual *ijtema*. The *ijtemaz* whether of the Jamaat-e-Islamia, Jameit-e-Tulba or Islamic Study Circle that attracted the young and old with greater propensity towards religion are a part of our history now. True, Iddgah has emerged as an epitome of sacrifices made by the people for their cause, but it is no more a hub of political activities as it used to be. So is true of our own Hyde-park. It no more echoes with speeches of the towering Kashmir leaders but is a rendezvous for teenyboppers.

It seems silence reigns. Is it a 'intriguing silence', 'golden silence', 'silence of conspiracy', 'silence of expediency', or 'silence of fear'. It is difficult to find a definition for the prevailing 'political quiet' in the state that has been picking at the tiny brains of our political analysts and commentators. What this silence portends is a riddle, a puzzle- a jigsaw puzzle. In this sea of silence there are some ripples some near and some distant that suggests that all is not dead. Octogenarian Syed Ali Shah Geelani makes his presence felt at one or the other place in the State. The newly born FASE with its mass contact programme against social evils and crimes has been creating some rustle here and there in otherwise deathly silent atmosphere. With New Delhi slowly and steadily wriggling out of its policy of rapprochement with Kashmir leaders espousing the 'cause of right to self-determination' or pleading for 'total independence' there are indication that majority of these organizations in tune with famous Kashmiri saying "quiet is silver if you maintain it is gold" have decided to adhere to an ingenious genera of politics- 'the quiet politics'.

Where will this 'quiet politics' lead our leaders? Whether it is silence before the storm or it is a step towards quit politics will be too early to predict. But in this intriguing political atmosphere when 'quiet' seems to have overwhelmed the political cacophony, when hope has been overtaken by despair, when the "Raj Bagh tribe" prefers a siesta as prelude to hibernation the Kashmir Diasporas seem to be more active than usual.

It has been a summer of Kashmir Conferences. There is hardly a place in the West where there has not been one or another conference. Of these Conferences and meetings the 6th International Kashmir Peace Conference held under the auspices of the Association of Humanitarian Lawyers and the Kashmiri American Council/Kashmir Centre in Washington D.C., on July 20th & 21st 2006, was unique and distinct on account of not only having invited India, Pakistan and Kashmir intelligentsia but also for having succeeded in attracting a host of international opinion makers.

The Conference was addressed by eminent scholars like Prof. Iqbal Cheema, Prof. Robert A Wirsing author of an internationally acclaimed book India, Pakistan and Kashmir Dispute, Prof. Kamal Chenoy, Author Ambassador, Maj General (Retd) Mahmud Ali Durrani. The journalist speakers included Mr. Bharat Bushan, Editor Daily Telegarph, Mr. Talat Hussain of Pakistan, Mr. Gautam Navlakha and Mr. Ved Bhasin. Other eminent personalities who made their presentations in the conference included Mr. Yasin Malik, Chairman, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front; Ms. Anuradha Bhasin; Mr. Gautam Navlakha; Mr. Ejaz Ul Haq, Federal Minister of Pakistan; Amb. Teresita Schaffaer; Amb. Yusuf Buch; Sardar Anwar Khan, President, Azad Kashmir; Dr. Ghulam Nabi Mir; Ms. Marjan Lucas, The Hague; Sardar Attique A. Khan; Mr. Lars Rise, Oslo; Mr. Mowahid H. Shah; Mr. Talaat Hussain; Dr. Mumtaz Ahmad; Ms. Karen Parker; Amb. John McDonald; Dr. Angana Chatterji; Mr. Pir Aftab Hussain Shah Jillani, PPPP; Mr. Amit Chakranarty.

I agree with the skeptics that holding of the conferences is no solution to the problem but they do help in identifying the tract that can facilitate in finding a solution. It is naïve to think that the Conferences held by Kashmir Diasporas in England, Brussels or Washington are of no avail in fact the import of such conference is far more than that meets the eye. The Conference at Washington was successful in as much as drawing more than a dozen US Congress members to the dais to talk about the resolution of the Kashmir Problem. It attracted the attention of President Jimmy Carter, Dr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Tsutomu Hata, former Prime Minister of Japan and Bishop Desmond Tutu who extended their best wishes for the success of the conference. Such conferences are in fact like oasis in a desert of despondency and despair. It is not of much of consequences as to who speaks what in these conference but debating the Kashmir Problem from different vantage points and people from different fields looking at the problem from different angles is in itself very important. One may or may not agree with all the views of some speakers but such conference do help in creating an international perspective for the problem which otherwise has lost its international status after India and Pakistan agreed to resolve it bilaterally and are shy of talking about the United Nations Resolutions to which both the countries are otherwise committed.

There can be no denying that Kashmir Problem when looked at in its historical perspective is on a firm pedestal of the Right to Self-Determina-

tion. As very aptly observed by Prof. Robert A Wirsing in his observations about the import of the Conference, this 'dispute has uniqueness among all the political entities on planet that itself provides some warrant of self-determination claim.' It is tomfoolery to create issues out of non issue. How does it matter if I touch my nose from behind the ear instead of from the front? There is need for holding such conferences at all levels including at the state level.

In modern world when concept of war is fast changing there is a need for a powerful and agile diplomacy to win a war. To take Kashmir out of despair and despondency the Kashmir leadership has to be innovative and in tune with the global trends.

BIG NAMES SMALL MEN

Titans of the Fourth Estate, doyens of the profession; men who refused to crawl; men who declined to grovel before the authority; men who fought heroic battles against the censorship and kept the flag of freedom of expression high during the darkest days of the Emergency; when one thinks of heroes of Emergency many big names come to the mind; Ram Nath Goenka, B.G. Vergeese, I. Irani, Kuldip Nayar, N. Ram and many others.

Notwithstanding some politicians calling them, 'bunch of cowards and pack of incurable drunkards who deserve to be kept at a distance' they fought the cause of restoring dignity to the democratic institutions in the country with valour and courage. But it is ironical that on the touch stone of Kashmir majority of these big names have failed, crumbled like pack of cards. How so big the names- Kashmir has dwarfed them. There is hardly a big name in Indian journalism that has not looked at Kashmir through the tinted glasses. To be precise through the glasses of people in power at New Delhi. There is hardly any who has passed the litmus test of objectivity when it came to Kashmir.

Kashmir is not suffering from journalistic apartheid today only. This discrimination against this beautiful valley, nestled in the bosom of mighty Himalayas, has been there for about a century now. What has been behind this apartheid- religion or politics is the moot point. This policy of discrimination by the Indian press against Kashmir was not born just with the birth of Kashmir dispute in 1947, when a "misplaced concept of Patriotism" overtook majority of media men in the newly born Indian domain. It even existed brazenly and blatantly during the people's movement against

feudal and autocratic Raj in the state in thirties. 'Misrule' of the Dogra rulers in Kashmir had caused a lot of anguish in the British Press but it had not drawn a flake of criticism in Delhi and Julemdhar newspapers.

In the contemporary history of Kashmir 13th July 1931 is an important milestone. On this day sky was cast with dark clouds and there was dust storm – the situation outside Srinagar jail was surly and gloomy, people in thousands had gathered to hear about the trial of an Abdul Qadeer who was being tried for sedition inside the jail. At noon when people were preparing for prayers police arrested five of them. This made them restive and they raised slogans against the government and in support of the young Pathan who had, few days back, given vent to peoples sentiments by raising his voice against cruel and unjust Dogra rulers. The ruthless Dogra soldiers opened fire on innocent people killing twenty one of them and injuring scores. So apathetic were the autocratic rulers that it ignored even treatment of the injured. This incident was followed by imposition of Martial Law and a reign of terror. No sooner did this news reach outside world than there was resentment all over the sub-continent. The Lahore press particularly Inqalab, Zamindar and papers owned and edited by Kashmiris raised a forceful voice against mayhem. The brutal killing of innocent people had provoked a lot of criticism against the autocratic rulers in the British press. But ironically the entire Julemdhar press Hind Samachar, Milap, Partap and many others justified the firing on the innocent and supported the brute action against humanity. These papers in their editorials and columns condemned the people's revolt against the autocracy and also castigated the leadership of the state. These papers totally distorted the news from Kashmir and carried banner headlines like, "The Revolt of Muslim Slaves", "Invasion of Hindu State by Muslims" etc. Even some papers owned by Sikh Organization like "Akali" official organ of Akali Dal condemned Muslim agitation and supported the Maharaja. Not only that, these newspapers distorted facts about Kashmir and even made efforts to create hurdles for Kashmir supportive Lahore papers, Writes Saraf, "Hindu press and leadership in the Punjab Succeeded in persuading the British Governor to take action against the daily Inqalab, Lahore which was spearheading the campaign for reforms in Kashmir".

It had not been only during the movement for restoration of rights and battle for ending of autocracy in the state that Delhi and Julemdhar press had been discriminatory against Kashmir but even later the apartheid continued. It is ironic that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who pre-

ferred Congress, Nehru and Gandhi to the Muslim League, Lique Ali Khan and Mohammad Ali Jinnah also failed to be the darling of press in India. He did initially have some votaries in the leftist press but later on they also turned against him and denounced him as 'American stooge'. In the wake of Delhi Agreement of 1952, a war of attrition started between Abdullah and his best friend Nehru. In this war New Delhi and Julemdhar press supported Nehru. To give a bad name to Sheikh some journalist created 'fairy tales about Sheikh Abdullah plans to join USA'. The then stalwarts of Indian Journalism Gira Lal Jain, R.K. Karanji and many others were not only hostile against this once best bet of Congress in Jammu and Kashmir but left no stone unturned to pin him down. Till his last days Sheikh was wary about the role played by what he called "Delhi Hindu Press" in spreading 'venom against him'. I remember a couple meetings with him, once with Dewan Bernider Nath of Press Asia International (PAI) and another with B.G. Koshy, Editor Onlooker Bombay (the agency and paper I wrote for). In these meeting also he was highly critical of the role played by New Delhi press.

True there were some exceptions in the New Delhi and other metropolitan newspapers that refused to be persuaded to paint Kashmir leaders and Kashmir politics in murky colours. There were some people who did not toe the official line of projecting the Kashmir problem out of context. There were some journalist who refused to betray the history and jaundice the public opinion in India. But, was seen that there were big names that had been "falling like Humpty Dumpty" when it concerned to Kashmir. B.G. Vargeese – a name in Indian journalism touched nadir when he complied Kunan Poshpora rape cases and published a bundle of lies. Kuldip Nayar another big name in Indian journalism. Many youth leaders have been seeing a great saviour in him but the question is has he ever called a spade and an spade projected Kashmir problem before people of India in its right historical perspective. No.

One could understand Kashmir politics or 'ongoing movement' being looking at by some journalist through the 'hallucinated-eyes of patriotism' but it becomes a travesty of justice when social crimes are also projected as politics. N. Ram is a big name in Indian journalism. Not withstanding the name of his paper which smacks of communalism and chauvinism, the Hindu is considered as highly objective newspaper but when it comes to Kashmir its objectivity also falls with a thud. This paper carried a lead article titled, "A Taliban Dawn in Kashmir". In this article an

attempt was made to project simple social problem into a 'fundamentalist' issue. This could not have been without purpose. What was the purpose behind projecting a simple social problem as something connecting with terrorism could be best known to this big name in Indian journalism. Exploitation of minor girls by politicians and bureaucrats under the canopy of power is not acceptable. If a similar sex-scandal or organized crime against innocent minor girls is unearthed in the capital- would the big name see Mullah Omar's or Osama bin Laden's hand in it? No, it will not. It will hold the government in power responsible for it and ask it to step down, promote a public sentiment against it. Then why different yards stick for Kashmir?

In Kashmir all big names turn out to be small men.

Definitions of 'Mainstream'

It was no eavesdropping. It was no keyhole peeping. It was being privy to a discussion amongst five senior officers, two I.A.S. officers and three Provincial Service Officers. I was uninvited. Should I call it being privy or a party albeit uninvited to the discussions is difficult to say. Scribes of whatever standing towering or midget are mostly unwelcome guests in the bureaucratic chambers. Majority of bureaucrats welcome scribes with cosmetic smiles out of expediency and not of love. So was I in the well done up office chambers of a direct recruit I.A.S. officer of a very early batch. The discussion revolved around a trite cliché- "Mainstream". The senior officer from the premier service in India has his own definitions of the word "mainstream" and "secularism"; He does not even hold the general definitions given to these word vis-à-vis Kashmir by his fraternity in New Delhi. There are many other clichés in vogue in Kashmir politics which are a part of journalistic parlance and public speeches. The most commonly used clichés are 'irrevocable accession', 'conditional accession', 'within the framework of constitution' 'mainstream politicians', 'separatist leaders', 'militants', 'terrorists', 'patriots', 'rebels', 'misled youth', 'surrogates', 'renegades' 'mujahideen' and many others which are by and large nicknames. These words which have lost their luster and candence over a period of time have become hackneyed and trite; they mean different things to different people depending upon from which vantage point you are looking at them. These words have entered into the political lexicon of Kashmir with different meanings, connotations and definitions. And there is hardly any state in India, where these clichés are a part of journalistic parlance and political vocabulary. These words are very spe-

cial to Kashmir; perhaps indicating the special position of this state that has been enjoined upon it both by the Constitution of India and the umpteen resolutions passed by the United Nation from 1947 to 1957.

Much before I would come to the discussion that took place on the word "Mainstream" in the office chambers of the member of the elite service, there is need to understand the psyche of the top state bureaucracy from the elite service in the state. This service was inherited from the British then known as ICS and renamed as IAS. The pattern of recruitment has not undergone much of a change over the past fifty seven years except the word "reservation" boldly incorporated in it. There is not much of change in the syllabus except the medium for writing this examination, broadened by including national language and other regional languages. Both the training institute and training methodology is the same that was introduced by the British- with a definite colonial design, except the changed nomenclature of the academy. Has the change of one syllable meant any change in the service or not is different subject. Should the service continue in the changed social and economic scenario is a different debate and discussion. Let us leave that to academicians. Notwithstanding the fact the academy in Mussouri casts member of this service in traditional *babu* mould, their role in other states is different than that in Jammu and Kashmir. The question is; are the members of this service when allotted to Jammu and Kashmir given a different briefing – and asked to play the role different from other members in the service? Many of them have taken the role of sleuths unto them in the state, which they believe is real patriotism. Misplaced or correct one is a different subject. They perhaps are given a different briefing when allotted to Jammu and Kashmir. Their behaviour in the state is reminiscent of "the sahib bureaucracy". There can be no two opinions that the psyche of members of this service allotted to the state is different from the psyche of other members of their fraternity. Majority of direct recruits nurse a grouse against the state. They believe that Kashmir society is not assimilating them in its socio-cultural fabric even after spending years of service in the state. "What stakes we have in this state; "We curse that day when we were allotted to this state; "It is hellish torture that we have to undergo during our service here"; "We are not acceptable to local bureaucracy"; "we are nicknamed as members of the East India Company". Many other highly caustic sentence are part of the usual conversation in the office chambers of many of these officers. These words found an echo in the discussions in the office chambers of the top bureau-

crat. The cliché "East India Company" is no jigsaw puzzle to me- it is not new to me, it had reverberated in the halls of the state legislature in eighties when members of this service had very surreptitiously tried to subvert the article 370 and the State Subject Laws by launching a housing society named as *Rajtarngni* Housing Society. The house was then almost one voice against the bureaucrats who had by their position made some pliable local officers to sign documents for creating inroads in the State Subject Laws. Notwithstanding majority of the bureaucrats of eighties having retired and relegated to the backstreets or popped off, the phrase has survived and continues to be part of bureaucratic lexicon in the state. True, the phrase is no more in vogue neither in newspapers nor in the local bureaucracy but it generally finds mention in the gossip of the members of the elite service. Discussions and gossips in the rooms of the top bureaucrats inside and outside grisly grey building opens a window to common people for understanding their mind set with regard to affairs of the state- particularly Kashmir province and some areas of Jammu province.

Definition given to word 'mainstream' by the top bureaucrat during his discussions with local officers cannot be taken in isolation of the collective psyche of his fraternity in the state. The moment he pointed towards one of the officers bearing a prayer mark on his forehead that he could not be taken as a part of mainstream bureaucracy, the dictionary meaning of this word came to my mind. The Webster defines the word as, 'The prevailing current or direction of a movement or influence'; the Cambridge defines it as, 'way of life or set of beliefs accepted by most people', the Oxford defines it as 'the prevailing trend of opinion, fashion, etc. Then came to my mind the meaning attached to this word by politician in New Delhi. This word vis-à-vis Kashmir to them means those of the politicians supporting 'finality of accession' with India, then came to my mind the meaning attributed to the word by the political parties espousing the cause of right to self-determination. For them mainstream means those of politicians in the vanguard of the movement for "freedom" but what meaning the top bureaucrat was going to attribute aroused my curiosity. Without mincing words he named two Muslim officers whom he had brought out from anonymity to the centre stage of administration during the Governor's rule and called them as real secular and belonging to the 'mainstream'. Without bating an eyelid he grunted, "During the month of Ramdan some Muslim officers often visit my office chambers for having tea and biscuits but these two officers are real secular, they enjoy drinks and relish pork in this month. They have shared toast with me on number

of occasions in this month. I like them", he asserted, "It was for their liberal ideas that I brought them from non-cadre departments to mainstream administration." The assertions made by this officer did raise eyebrows of the officers sitting in his room but they did not react the way they should have; perhaps for their "*Dilooy-notuwa*" which is characteristic of local bureaucracy.

The question is definition given to the word "mainstream" by this bureaucrat an indicator of the mindset of this tribe in state administration? May be readers know answer better than the writer.

Making of Authors

Anonymity to stardom- this is what happens to many people. In the age of electronic media many a lesser mortals after falling into the deep ditch of adversity shoot into prominence. Their images are beamed in our drawing rooms and embossed on our minds. They are made to look larger than life or their smaller beings are blown out of proportions and midgets are made to look as phantasmagoria. The hard knocks of bad days also hammer out masterpieces and elegant artifacts out of shapeless raw materials. This is what happened to two Geelani's - Iftikhar Gilani and Syed Abdul Rehman Geelani- one working as a scribe and another as Arabic teacher in the Capital of one of largest democracies in the world. At the turn of the century the two attracted screaming headlines in thousands of newspapers published across India and outside- perhaps for wrong reasons- they dominated the news channels- they were detained, many believe that the suffixes to their names, even relationship with prominent Hurriyat Conference, Syed Ali Shah Geelani known for his unbending and uncompromising stand on Kashmir brought barrage of miseries to them but at the same time made them celebrities. Notwithstanding the two spelling their surnames differently- in New Delhi often one was mistaken for another.

I do not know if it were suffixes to their names that had made them the bull's-eye or they were involved in crimes- let history decide it. They were lucky that they found by their side stronger Indian voices; Uma Kant; Aruna Roy; Arundhati Roy; Babu Mathew; Anohite Majamudar; S.K. Panady; Nandita Haksar; Prabash Joshi; Sanjay Kak; Surrender Mohan; A.G.Noorani and scores of journalists and teachers in the historic

capital city of Delhi. With such a strong and saner Indian voices standing by their side and taking out protest rallies against their detention their getting catapulted to the centre stage of politics and emerging as icons of Kashmir 'resistance movement' was a natural corollary. But what attracted my attention is not that they found strong lobbies in Delhi, But it is the two books released very recently in the capital- one published by Penguin India and another by a consortium of publishers, Promilla and Co, Bibliophile South Asia and Poles Apart that attracted my attention and spawned this write up.

Syed Ali Shah Geelani has written more than two dozen books- some containing stories about his detentions and some commentaries on various political events. But what could be called a magnum opus is yet to trickle down from his pen and his books by and large remained confined to Kashmir; perhaps for their having been written in Urdu or purely being of local relevance. His works attracted no big publishers like Penguin, Oxford, Permanent Black, Rolli or Sterling. But the books by junior Geelani's for having touched some vital issues attracted the attention of scholars and commoners alike. I read 148 pages of elegantly looking book 'The Prison Diary' by Iftikhar Gilani published by Penguin India during siesta hour in one sitting. Having read a lot of prison literature and prison diaries by many eminent writers in my youth days, I did not find anything saucy in the book. I did not find anything hair-raising or awe striking that would warrant a comment but then I did not realize that between the lines the book was conveying a very strong message. It was pointing towards an alarming situation that was fast emerging in the Indian state with the potential of spawning yet another movement like one launched by the Muslim League in twenties and thirties of the past century. The book sufficiently pointed towards increasing Muslim prisoners in jails, which were sufficient pointers towards emerging scenario in this highly pluralistic country.

True the book for having been published in Delhi and author having remained in headlines for longer periods, it attracted plethora of reviews. There is hardly a name in Indian journalism that did not review the book, but what majority of reviewers ignored or escaped their attention was the increasing number of Muslims in detention in jails.

The author belonging to journalist fraternity has many friends in the Mushtaq Enclave, of Srinagar; some who rallied behind him during 'night-marish' days of his life. He dropped in our newspaper office and pre-

sented me the Urdu translation of the book. Get up of the book made me re-read the book and this time I read the book in the wee hours and found the book deserved more attention than I had given to it when I read it for the first time. It was not tale of just a few pickpockets inside jails. In my opinion the quintessence of the book is the discrimination against the Muslim prisoners and how even an ordinary Muslim pickpocket is looked at as the greatest terrorist or a war criminal inside various jails in New Delhi. The author has very subtly pointed out that it was strange that in a country where Muslims number to twelve percent of the total population, thirty four percent of jail population was Muslims, The increasing number of Muslims in jails is not a sociological problem but a highly volatile political problem, having the potential of spawning yet another movement of 'reassertion' by the Indian Muslims- to which yet another catalyst of Vanda Matram has been added.

Another book with almost a similar message that attracted my attention was Manufacturing Terrorism- Kashmir Encounter with Media and Law. I do not know anything about academic tract record of teacher Syed Abdul Rehman Geelani but the above mentioned book by his younger brother Syed Bismallah Geelani with a forward by prominent human right's activist and Supreme Court lawyer Nandita Haksar deserves a serious attention. As very rightly pointed by Haksar in her foreword, "the book is a monograph on state violence against Kashmiri's living in Delhi and it covers much wider subject of *Kashmiryat*. She writes that the Poles Apart was not publishing this study as a victims account of State Violence. She enumerates number of points which she believes makes the study different. But out of all the points she strongly believes that the 'strength of study is that it is written by Kashmiri Muslim who has faced all aspects of state violence and it contains in its pages the hope of a possible resolution based on equitable principles and peace with justice. In his acknowledgments the author is bubbling with emotions for the people who supported him in carrying out his study, thereby bringing out out a noble face of Delhi before his readers.

The book spreading over 236 pages and starting with a couplet from Shahbaz, perhaps Ali Mohammad Shahbaz of Kupwara who had fallen to bullets of unidentified gunmen, 'We had no such experience before we encountered you. It is this encounter that has seasoned us' not only makes an interesting reading but sends a chill down the spine. It is not the discussion about *Kashmiryat* in the book that makes it interesting. Every

Tom, Dick and Harry from snuff dealers in old Bohri Kadal to sledge pullers on the slopes of Gulmarg has been writing about *Kashmiryat*- a non-subject and a word of no consequences. But what makes the book interesting is the horrifying accounts given by the author about his being identified as Kashmiri Muslim in highly pluralistic city of Delhi. The fort of the book are the chapters about life of Kashmiri Muslims in Delhi and how media has been constructing terrorist out of students, laborers and petty traders hawking Kashmir handicrafts in the lanes and by lanes of Delhi. The book has very beautifully analyzed the role played by media in constructing 'terrorist' out of ordinary citizens. The book is not based on conjectures and surmise but on the basis of the research carried out by the author under the supervision of some genuine and well meaning Indians. There are lots of interviews conducted by the author who have undergone suffering because of over-enthusiastic media in the capital making every attempt to construct a terrorist out of simple students and petty Kashmiri traders in the capital for selling stories to Indian middle class glued to idiot box.

The books by two Geelani's are just the tips of iceberg but reading helps one to have a feel situation in the capital.

No Edward Said On Our Side

'The West is the best'. I am not an obscurantist or anachronistic, when I make a statement like this about literature available on Kashmir problem. Majority of us who dabble in writing on Kashmir politics are convinced that the best literature available on this important dispute on which peace in the South-Asian region is hinged is authored either by the American, or the European, particularly British historians and scholars. Some of these works are now as good as part of classical literature on Kashmir. History of Kashmir dispute for a student is incomplete without reading monumental works like "Two Nations and Kashmir" by Lord Birdwood, "Danger in Kashmir" by Josef Korbel, "trilogy the Disputed Legacy", "the Birth of Tragedy" and "Incomplete Partition" by Alistair Lamb and "India, Pakistan and Kashmir Dispute" by Robert G. Wirising or even the odd papers by Stephen Cohen. It may sound an exaggeration to state that study of all works of Stanly Wolpert about leaders of the sub-continent is important for understanding place of Kashmir in India-Pakistan relations. As is very rightly said by Stephen Philip Cohen in his book "India Emerging Power", "Kashmir is both cause and consequence of the India-Pakistan conundrum". For the dispute having firmly wedged in the internal politics of the two countries, it is hard to tell where the domestic politics ends and foreign politics begins. Works of Stanley Wolpert like *Roots of Confrontation in South Asia*, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, *Nehru: Tryst with Destiny*, *Gandhi's Passion and Shameful Flight* are essential reading for understanding South Asian politic. Works of this engineer turned historian always have hair raising details which have either been glossed over or overlooked by earlier historians and authors.

In his new book *Shameful Flight: The Last Days of British Empire in India* (250 pages) published by Oxford University Press, he has made a startling revelation that India's first High Commissioner in Pakistan, Sri Prakasa had told Lord Mountbatten that for the sake of peace all around the best thing that India could do was handing over Kashmir to Pakistan. This statement had 'amazed' Nehru and in his letter to Sri Prakasa he had reacted very sharply to the suggestion and stated to him that if anything like this was done by the government it would not live for a day. The book which has many more such details has also been reviewed by Indian historians and authors like Prof. Mushiural Hasan. But none of the reviewers (I have read so far) has detailed out the exposures made about Kashmir in the book. This brings me to a fundamental question; why our researchers, scholars and historians have failed to come out with an authentic work on Kashmir Problem or contemporary India-Pakistan history. There is hardly a book on Kashmir dispute by a Kashmiri that could be called as authentic having international acceptability. In fact Kashmir scholars of whatever standing have so far failed to create a dent in the international book market with a book on Kashmir. Have American and European writers, researchers, scholars and academician's better understanding of the problems confronting the South Asian region or the sub-continent. True, there is scope of disagreement over some points for instance many Indian journalists and academicians have not agreed with the Alastair Lamb disputing existence of an instrument of accession; or many Indian authors have not agreed with Stanley Wolpert about his remarks about Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru or Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi. But there can be no dispute over these authors having a better insight into the politics of sub-continent. I am yet to see a standard work on Kashmir problem by a Kashmir historian, scholar and researcher that could match the works of authors like Lamb or Wolpert.

True, two well researched books; *Kashmir Wounded Paradise* by Dr. Altaf Hussain and *Kashmir in Chains* by Er. Muhammad Sultan Pampori were published in first half of last decade of the past century but it will be difficult to say that if these books did influence any opinion makers outside the state or not, perhaps not as reach of these books for their being published locally was limited. Authors of these two books do not fall within the category of scholars and academicians as they do not fit in the traditional definition of the term. It is only teachers, good or bad working in Universities that are called academicians. There are hardly any 'schol-

ars' or 'academicians' of Kashmir University who can claim of having produced an authentic research work about Kashmir problem genesis, complexity and resolution. It is not the Kashmir problem talking about which is taboo in Kashmir University for the fear of "being reported" that has not been part of academic pursuits of scholars and researchers in Kashmir university. But even they are selective while writing about the medieval period of Kashmir history which by and large they believe is a safe to write about. Many of our scholars have worked on medieval period of Kashmir history but by and large majority of these histories are prototypes- just replicating what has already been said by historians like G.M. D. Sufi and none of the works is path breaking. Medieval period of our history which many prefer to call the Muslim period is one of most fascinating periods but in strict sense there is no history of this period and whatever we have about this period is anything but chronology of major events. Majority of us blame members of another community who were literate a couple of generations before us of having distorted the Muslim period of our history but what have our historians done so far to remove those distortions and present history of the period in right perspective. There is a lesson for our historians and scholars in the works of William Dalrymple- how. This young scholar has been in a position to reconstruct history of the last days of the Mughal period. His latest book the *Last Mughal* has not only created ripples in Indian academics but produced waves that have made many a traditional Mughal scholars shake of their feet. Dalrymple did not have access to records which other scholars had not for having written a magnum opus delineating the life and times of Bhadur Shah Zafar. He made best use of 'beautifully catalogued Mutiny papers in the National archives seventy five percent of which had never been requisitioned before by any scholar. There is a lot of archival material available in research libraries and private collections of people about medieval period but hardly any of scholars has been endeavouring to read these primary sources. So is true about writings of Kashmir Problem. Whatever little has written about Kashmir problem by Kashmiri authors has suffered to due to other considerations.

There is lot of literature on struggle of people of the state for ending autocratic rule in the state which is generally described as freedom struggle by majority of our historians. But there is hardly an authentic work on Kashmir problem which could be compared to the works of Edward Said on Palestine.

The question arises why we have failed to produce an intellectual like Edward Said who could have emerged as genuine Kashmir voice as the Palestinian intellectual emerged as a voice of Arab world in the west through his works and changed global outlook about Arabs and stirred conscience of the world about Palestine problem. It has been by and large through his works only that Palestine problem entered American discourses. I do not have a dictionary type meaning for the question; why we have failed to attract an intellectual like Edward Said on our side - perhaps we are yet to grow intellectually and to mature politically.

My Cameramen Are My Historians

It was the year of photo exhibitions. Many photographic exhibitions were held; some sponsored by the government, some organized by Non Governmental Agencies (NGO's), some results of individual efforts and some an expression of deep love for the past Kashmir. Some exhibitions were focused on the heritage of Kashmir, reminding us of beautiful architecture that was born in Kashmir after the advent of Islam which survived the oppressive Sikh and Dogra rule and assimilated the European influences lending it an aura of aboriginality but suffered for the myopic vision of the "popular" leadership. One of the heritage groups organized a presentation on power point about a Mogul City known as Nagar Nagari. It reminded us of the great Mughal artistry, adventures, aesthetics and romances. It painfully reminded us of the beautiful architecture that was born inside this city and vandalized after the end of the feudal rule. The show was not only an odyssey down the memory lane but reminded us of the great stories of love and romance that remain buried under the debris in this once humming and pulsating city. It reminded us about the galloping horses and speeding chariots. It reminded us of the toiling men and women who had built the great wall around the city- that insulated the alien soldiers from the aborigines. The group has a dream of making people to relive their past. Can people relive their past once again as was done long before by putting a light and sound show in early sixties on the Western side of *Kohimaran*.

There were exhibitions of old black and white photographs, with each of the photographs a master piece reminding us of the bygone days when the banks of historical river Jhelum looked no less than Venice.

Houses with beautiful latticed window, glistening spires of temples, the minarets of mosques and hospice with pyramidal roofs adding a distinctive mystique to the city, latticed balconies, ornate windows with coloured glasses reminded us of many a Romeo and Juliet of yester years that might have lived by the side of this serpentine river woven in the mosaic of myths and fables.

Exhibitions in glittering halls of SKICC or dingy rooms of State Institute of Education reminded me of photographic album titled *Kashmir-Paradise Lost* by Martin A Sugarman an American photo journalist. Album published in 1994 is dedicated to some A.U.Zaman and 'all Kashmiri struggling for freedom and dignity.' The album published by Sugarman Production Malibu, California in 1994 has Kashmiri boy with a toy gun on its cover. The arrival of this international camera man in November 1993 has been full of drama- the drama of hide and seeks. As the camera man writes in brief introduction to the album that it was not easy to click in Kashmir those days. In his words, "I visited Kashmir to document the social and political turmoil and massive human rights abuses there. Due to the government of India's restrictions on journalists visiting the area, I applied for a tourist visa and found the means and assistance to work under cover for a month or so before the Indian authorities learned of my true purpose. Under very threatening conditions, I managed to escape with all my films and interviews. Unlike Vietnam or Bosnia, media has failed in Kashmir for not getting horrifying story out." He had hoped that 134 picture album in 10"X12" size would spark interest in the media to expose this tragic situation to the world." In three page introduction to the album he has tried to sum up the situation as it obtained in the state during his visit. The album very subtly tells the sordid story of Kashmir as captured by the lens man. The lens man has used black and white medium very powerfully to communicate the ghoulish situation. The first picture shows a heap of debris and rubble of some destroyed township with a small boy pacing the street. It has been captioned as, 'No light but rather darkness visible' a verse from Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The cameraman has not only filmed horrifying tale on this side of the Line of Actual Control but has also covered the migrant camps on the other side. It would require pages together to convey the subtle messages contained in each of the pictures. In fact each picture is book in itself. It folds a whole bloody drama before our eyes. The second picture of an old historic stone temple with a deity carved out of a big limestone slab, with cracks in its walls perhaps symbolizes the sad departure of Hindus from Kashmir. The third picture is of toddler against

the grave of his father named Peerzadia Abdul Majid Shah killed on Saturday March 6, 1993. If one goes into details of the pictures it speaks about the plight of the young innocent boy and symbolizes the hard times ahead for him as an orphan with none to look after him. The Dal Lake as captured by Sugarman portends about the fate of this lake. The album portrays the social life inside insurgency torn towns and cities, desolate streets, stray dogs, toiling Kashmiris, busy streets with everybody in hurry, lone fruit vendor with heaps of pomegranates against the backdrop of huge sand bag bunkers in the maze of electric wires, long queues of people waiting for their turn for rationed kerosene oil and gas cylinders lined up like soldiers, inside the shanties that have cropped up in and around Srinagar and deplorable condition of hospitals in Kashmir. Faith of people has very subtly been captured. Every frame has its own shade and meaning. Some of the pictures are so powerful that they immediately transport one into medieval Kashmir and suggest that nothing much has changed in here during the past one century. A village picture shows different age groups of women huddled together on grass with only symbol of modernity in the background a bicycle. The pictures inside hospitals tell a terrifying story about the condition inside the hospitals. There are pictures of people who had been roughed up by forces. The pictures inside Azad Kashmir tell a different story. The album undoubtedly is a monumental work. It has not only been Martin Sugarman who has captured Kashmir scenes during past sixteen years but there have been scores of photojournalists and camera men who have snapped the blazing valley in its trauma and trouble. Hardly any of them has so far come up with a collection. It has not only been photojournalists from outside who have photographed the people's plight but a host of Kashmir photojournalist have very ably captured the plight, trauma and drama of Kashmir state through their lenses. Some of the photo journalists whose works I had an opportunity to see have been Merajudin, Habib Naqash and the Late Qaiser Mirza. These camera men have always had an eye for a picture. I had an opportunity of going through the grand collection of the Late Qaiser Mirza, who started as an amateur but graduated to professionalism after he joined Associated Press as a journalist. He defiantly had a tiger's heart and clicked pictures in terrifying situations. His collection ran into thousands of pictures with almost every picture giving volumes of information about the happenings in Kashmir during the nineties. He, along with some American journalists had met Hizbul Mujahideen Chief Syed Salluhudin and clicked him in all his moods. Mirza had planned to publish an album on

Kashmir but death took him over. Naqash who works as photo editor in Greater Kashmir. He has a wonderful eye of taking off beat pictures and his shots are defiantly distinct from many others. He has been in the profession for the past more than twenty five years and has in fact captured history of Kashmir for quarter of century in all its shades, moods and actions. Equally, Merajudin has been clicking for the past more than thirty years. He has clicked Sheikh Abdullah from roar to grave, many militant leaders from firing first shot to their bidding farewell to arms and from surging highways to desolate streets and Bazars.

Collections of these photojournalists are the real history of Kashmir—a picture is more powerful and communicative than thirteen hundred word Punchline column.

If there would have been publisher like Ghulam Muhammad and Noor Muhammad of thirties and forties Merajudin and Naqash would have been much sought after persons and their works would have been published.

“GOURD AND BRINJAL DAYS”

My salad days were not juicy and syrupy. Like many of my contemporaries they were bitter but not as biting and poignant as the days of our children. Notwithstanding uncertainty then also looming large, we had a childhood — if not that playful as children of free nation's have but we derived greater pleasure out of smaller things. ‘*Tikatar*’ (sending across a small projectile across stagnant waters with force) would give us a great pleasure than modern day expensive children gadgets. Notwithstanding sources of entertainment for children having multiplied our children have no ‘childhood’. Bunkers, batons and bullets have consumed their childhood. Who is the author of the ‘uncertainty’ that denied me dallies, romances and joys of my youth and the childhood to my children. If I answer I may be adjudged as biased. My answer may be taken as jaundiced. My version may be considered as tinted. I have no answer but history holds a bright Belisha beacon that illuminates hitherto darkest corners and tells many a story about the faux pas, boops and blunders of the people in whom we saw what Faiz called “*Sheisha Ka Messiah*”.

My salad days were days of ‘gourd and brinjal’ politics. It was an indigenous genus of politics. A genre that had come into being after drilling in public minds some names with dexterity. A type that is comparable to ‘political monarchy’ where personality is more important than politics, where principles and values are butchered with blunt knives, where genuine political workers are trampled down under the hooves of galloping horses, where speeding chariots pierce through the rows of half-naked and semi-famished people without caring who gets crushed. I also might have been part of the great ‘gourd and brinjal’ caravan that

dominated the political landscape of our State. Like many in the multitudes of people my thoughts those days were pure and most of the leaders had embossed more than life image on my mind. Like multitudes of people, I also believed that the leaders were driving us towards the D-day. The day for which millions living in the salubrious vales and dales of the great kingdom have been waiting for hundreds of years. True, the 'Day' knocked at our doors many times but we failed to recognize the knock-knock and mistook it as a canker.

In my salad days I had no wisdom to chaff good politics from bad politics. True, then I had not read *trilogy – the Disputed Legacy, the Birth of a Tragedy, the Incomplete Partition* by Alistair Lamb, I had not read historians like Prof. Robert Wirsing, Lord Birdwood, Josef Korbel and score of other European and Americans. True, then I had not read magnum opuses on Kashmir by Rashid Taseer, Prem Nath Bazaz, Mohammad Yousuf Saraf and Bashir Ahmed Qureshi. True, then I had not read Mathai's and B.N. Mullick's. True, then I had not talked and interviewed scores of leaders having been key players in politics that shaped Kashmir politics at crucial juncture of 1947. My perceptions about contemporary Kashmir politics have been shaped more by histories written by independent historians and unbiased writers. I do not know if I should be remorseful about my 'gourd and brinjal' days or I should be complacent about them. It is a jigsaw puzzle but many a times I relish them when I compare them to the situation as it obtains today.

I relish the Plebiscite Front days of Kashmir politics. Let me not talk about the end result of this politics but about the people involved in it and organization that it was. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was arrested in 1953 and blamed of working for independent Kashmir. Was Sheikh really working for Independent Kashmir or not or it were hardliner Hindus within Congress who meticulously worked against him through B.N. Mullick is a different subject. But, it was the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah followed by 'steady drifting of Kashmir into Indian orbit' by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad by introducing Jammu and Kashmir Constitution modeled on Indian constitution 'with bicameral legislature' that spawned the Plebiscite Front. In the history of right to self-determination movement the birth of the Plebiscite Front is an important benchmark. Only very few from the erstwhile National Conference joined the Plebiscite Front. More than ninety percent legislators joined Bakshi. It was only few officers who for their allegiance to Sheikh Abdullah were foolishly dismissed by the new Prime Minister

that stood by Sheikh and his trusted lieutenant Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg after 1953. The Front filled a great political void in the state politics that had been caused due to the self-imposed or forced exile of the Muslim Conference leaders. The Muslim Conference workers who had been 'betrayed' by their leaders joined in hordes the Plebiscite Front with the hope of realizing their much cherished goal of 'acceding to Pakistan'. Others who filled the ranks of the Front before 1947 were members of the erstwhile Students Federation which was before 1947 headed by K.H. Khurshid. There was reversal of roles for Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1953. In the words of Alistair Lamb, "Sheikh Abdullah became Pakistani public hero; and soon it would be the Indians who would call him 'a Quisling'". In fifties and even after the Plebiscite Front was the only pro-right to self-determination organization that established its units all over the state. It had a unit almost in every nook and corner of the State. Despite lures and doles offered by people in the power the Plebiscite Front workers stood by the side of their cause like a rock. They suffered torture and endured torment at the hands of hoodlums and goons then nicknamed as twenty-nine-fifteen (as they would get Rs.29 and Annas 15 as salary). Their modern version can be renegades. I do not know whether it were the leadership qualities of Sheikh Abdullah or organizing capacity of Mirza Afzal Beg or the strength of "the sentiment" that was behind the Front movement that had made it as one of the most impregnable pro-right to self-determination organization after 1947. Let me not debate why this organization died and who wrote its epitaph that is a part of our history but I can say with authority that the cadre of this organization was never exhausted and tired, it stood like a rock with the 'cause' they fought. I count those days as 'gourd and brinjal' days- not as derogatory phase but a genus of Kashmir politics, where personality cult has an over riding impact on politics. In 1977, I wrote an article in the *Radiance*, Delhi (July 3 1977 issue), 'Kashmir After Sheikh Abdullah?' It was then that I stated "the personality cult politics will die in Kashmir after Sheikh Abdullah, a big chapter of Kashmir history will be concluded and concept of collective leadership will be born".

But, if one looks at the contemporary history of the 'struggle for right to self-determination' in real perspective the present movement is a continuation of the movement started in 1931 under the aegis of the Muslim Conference of which the Plebiscite Front was an important phase. The Plebiscite Front movement cannot be called as the progenitor of the present National Conference but it can be called as forerunner of the Hurriyat

Conference A,B, C, D, etc. But there is a marked difference between Muslim Conference and Plebiscite Front days and the present movement. Whatever the achievements and failures of this movement the Hurriyat Conference led movement is no match to the Front movement or the Muslim Conference movement. Hurriyat Conference (whatever its suffixes) believes in forum politics, forums do not lead movements. It is the organization yet to be born in Kashmir. It needs a Gandhi or a Jinnah to lead movements whatever the cause.